



ORGREAVE
TRUTH AND JUSTICE CAMPAIGN



Orgreave Truth and Justice 40 years on **The Case for an Inquiry**



I recently outlined to the Home Office the case for such an Independent Panel for Orgreave. So far that case has not been accepted. However, I remain convinced of the need for a formal process and will continue discussions to that end in this Diocese. I remain hopeful that progress can yet be made and I remain ready to assist in whatever way I can, whenever the time is right.¹

**The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox,
The Bishop of Sheffield**

I've still got the scar from the busted head I had. I had a truncheon wield, a fractured skull. I had to go back to the hospital as I started to get headaches and double vision. I had to have a drainage done. This was before the trial ... I have terrible paranoia that they are waiting to get us for something else because we challenged them and made them look stupid. I have these thoughts that when I go to put the news on it will all start again. Others feel that their phones are being tapped. I've had to ask for psychiatric help. It never goes away. It's in the news, in the paper. It never goes away. My kids have lived with it. They've seen me breakdown on occasions. I still do now. Something will trigger it and I'll have a good cry. I had the breakdown a good few years after the trial. I'm still feeling it now.

**Arthur Critchlow,
Arrested Miner**

I do get depression as well. I get highs and lows. My highs never get higher than feeling medium and my lows are very low. It's still the case now, in fact it gets worse as I get older. I get it in the winter time really bad. When smallest thing goes wrong I go under a cloud. I was different before the strike ... I didn't think about it on a daily basis until I got involved but I do think about it daily now. There could be a conversation in the pub, someone asking me what I'm doing now ... It's made me over cautious.

Kevin Horne, Arrested Miner

We tried to get back to normal but it's never gone away and I don't think it ever will ... I have another daughter, grown up now, Rebecca and a few years back she called me and said I needed to come home. Rebecca had phoned the doctor because of the state she had found her dad in. The doctor came to the house and said that Arthur was suffering with trauma. That carries on. I know I have to be strong for him.

**Tina Critchlow
(Arthur Critchlow's wife)**

¹ *The Independent*, Battle of Orgreave: Home Office rejects independent review into mine picket line clashes, Sally Wardle, 5 March 2019.

**Media Inquiries:
orgreavejustice@hotmail.com**

**Available to the public in PDF:
<https://otjc.org.uk/>**



Photographs © Martin Shakeshaft and © Martin Jenkinson

If you wish to reproduce any of the photographs contained within this report, please contact the Photographer directly to secure the relevant license:

Martin Shakeshaft: <https://strike84.co.uk/>

Martin Jenkinson: <https://mjimages.pressphotos.co.uk/>

Index

Section 1: Introduction	5
Summary of events	6
Justice delayed is justice denied	10
A longstanding cover up of public concern	13
Inquiry format	16
Overarching questions for the Inquiry	18
Section 2: Events relating to Orgreave	19
Orgreave 18 June 1984	20
Media reporting	25
Collapse of 1985 trial of miners for riot	29
1991 settlement	32
2015 IPCC Review	33
Orgreave Truth And Justice Campaign 2015	
Submission to the Home Secretary	33
Files released into the public domain, or not	36
Government response since 2016	40
Section 3: Public statements v private acts	43
Section 4: What could a Public Inquiry achieve?	53
Restore justice	54
Restore accountability	54
Restore operational independence of the Police	54
Restore standards in public life	55
Section 5: Summary	57

Section 1: Introduction

“ We [the Labour Party] support a full investigation into the violent events at Orgreave. ”

Angela Rayner MP, Shadow Deputy Prime Minister and Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, September 2023, TUC conference

“ Coalfield communities need to know the truth about what happened at Orgreave ... we have discovered there are hundreds of files on Orgreave that have never been released. Several forces have told us they have information ... These files need urgently to be examined so that as much of this information as possible can now be published. But it has to be an independent review to have credibility – which is why we have asked the Home Secretary to set it up, so that as many files as possible can then be released. ”

Yvette Cooper MP, Chair Commons’ Home Affairs Select Committee, 2018



Police escort miners pickets along Sheffield Parkway to Orgreave, 18 June 1984.
© Martin Jenkinson

1. **Orgreave represents one of the most serious abuses of power by police and government in this country's industrial and trade union history, the truth of which has never been told or acknowledged by the State. Instead, successive Conservative Governments and senior police have worked to cover it up. It is important that the truth is established via an independent inquiry and that the police and government are brought to account.**
2. The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC) welcomes the Labour Party's proactive public commitment to 'a full investigation into the violent events at Orgreave' during the 1984/5 miners' strike. This promise results from the long campaign for truth and justice by the OTJC including meetings, rallies, lobbying and media coverage. As has been proven time and again with the Hillsborough tragedy, the Post Office scandal, the Infected Blood scandal, Windrush, Blacklisting, Shrewsbury 24 and others the 'truth will out'.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

3. The Orgreave Coking Plant, now demolished, stood on the outskirts of Sheffield, approximately eight miles from the Hillsborough Stadium, scene of the Hillsborough disaster on 15th April 1989, in which 97 Liverpool supporters were unlawfully killed. The plant supplied coke to the power station at Scunthorpe some 20 miles away.
4. In March 1984 the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) launched a national strike in response to the plans of the National Coal Board (NCB) to close a number of pits. The NCB claimed that it wanted to close 20, but the NUM maintained – and subsequent events proved them right – that more than 70 pits were on the NCB's hit list. In the decade after 1984 the coal-mining industry was effectively destroyed, with devastating consequences for the miners, their families and their communities.
5. The NUM called for a mass picket outside the Orgreave coking plant on 18th June 1984, aimed at disrupting the supply of coke from Orgreave to Scunthorpe. It followed a series of smaller demonstrations at the plant in May and early June. Whereas in the first three months of the strike police forces around the country had done their utmost to prevent pickets from reaching the colliery or plant where they planned to demonstrate, on this occasion, 18th June, the police 'fell over themselves' to be 'helpful', guiding and ushering miners to the site and, in particular, to the 'topside'; the field to the south of the plant. Many of the pickets were surprised by this unusual display of police courtesy, and some were – rightly, as it turned out – suspicious. The 'topside' was a field bounded at its bottom by a cordon of police officers six and more deep, blocking access to the plant. The two sides of the field were patrolled by dog handlers with their charges and a steep railway embankment and railway lines marked the back of the field. The only real escape route was over a narrow railway bridge at the top corner of the field, and this led into Orgreave village, with domestic housing on the right and a small industrial estate to the left.
6. What happened on 18th June 1984 was not a battle but a rout. In the lull that followed a number of what were by then ritual but ineffectual pushes against the police lines, the officer in charge of the police operation, Assistant Chief Constable Clement, ordered the police lines to open. As they did so, dozens of mounted officers, armed with long truncheons, charged up the field, followed by snatch squad officers in riot gear, with short shields and truncheons. The miners fled up the hill towards the

embankment and the railway bridge. Many of those who couldn't or wouldn't run were assaulted with batons, causing several serious injuries, and dragged back through the police lines to a temporary detention centre opposite the plant.

7. Several similar charges followed, forcing the miners up into the village, where they tried to find refuge in gardens and in the yards of the industrial units opposite. The police ran amok, clubbing and arresting miners indiscriminately.
8. It was a miracle no-one was killed. One officer was seen on television straddling a defenceless miner on the ground and battering him repeatedly about the head with his truncheon. Because the incident was witnessed by millions on TV, South Yorkshire Police interviewed the officer, PC Martin from the Northumbria force, two days later. PC Martin said: 'It's not a case of me going off half cock. The Senior Officers, Supers and Chief Supers were there and getting stuck in too – they were encouraging the lads and I think their attitude to the situation affected what we all did.'² The papers were referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who advised that PC Martin should not be prosecuted. There is no record of PC Martin being disciplined, either.
9. Altogether 55 miners were arrested at the topside, and all of them were charged with 'riot', an offence which at that time carried a potential life sentence. A further 40 men were arrested at the 'bottom' (Catcliffe) side. They were charged with the marginally less serious offence of 'unlawful assembly'.
10. It was not until May 1985, almost a year later, that the case came to court. 15 miners, all charged with riot, appeared at Sheffield Crown Court in what was intended by the Prosecution to be the first of a series of trials. The trial collapsed after 48 days of hearings, when the Prosecution abandoned the case. It became clear as the police witnesses trooped in and out of the court that many officers had had large parts of their statements dictated to them, and that many of them had lied in their accounts, claiming to have seen things they could not have seen, or that they had arrested someone they had not. One statement with a signature forged by a police officer simply disappeared from court over lunch-time, never to re-appear.
11. It also emerged in the course of the trial that new and unlawful public-order policing tactics set out in a secret police manual had been used for the first time at Orgreave. At times the trial descended into farce, and the Prosecution, cutting its losses, dropped the cases of the remaining 80 miners.
12. There was never any investigation into the conduct of the police for assaulting, wrongfully arresting and falsely prosecuting so many miners, nor for lying in evidence. Not a single officer faced disciplinary or criminal proceedings. Five years later, however, and a year after the Hillsborough disaster, South Yorkshire Police agreed to pay a total of nearly £500,000 to 39 of the miners, without admitting that they had done anything wrong.
13. **We set out here, 40 years on, why the case for an inquiry into what happened at Orgreave is incontrovertible – for justice for the brutal treatment of miners that day, and accountability of police and government for their abuse of power with serious ramifications for democracy in this country.**
14. An inquiry into Orgreave has the benefit of work already undertaken by the IPCC, the Home Affairs Select Committee (chaired by Yvette Cooper MP), the OTJC and journalists to identify relevant files and themes on which the inquiry should focus. The

2. IPCC review of matters relating to the policing of events at Orgreave coking plant in 1984 (IPCC Review), p.33.

Striking miners at Orgreave playing Pitch & Toss in front of riot police, 18 June 1984.
© Martin Jenkinson





IPCC has confirmed that the ‘lengthy work’ it has done can give an Orgreave inquiry a substantial head start.³

15. South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and its recently-retired Crime Commissioner, Canon Alan Billings, have funded an archivist’s post so that around 1,474 files of material – amounting to 82,913 pages – can be professionally catalogued and digitised. It is understood that many of the planning decisions for Orgreave are included in this archive. The OTJC appreciates this important development. We believe these documents are integral to the inquiry. The fact that they are already in the process of being professionally archived will support the inquiry’s review of all the documents that relate to Orgreave.
16. A properly established inquiry into Orgreave will help reduce the anger ‘about what politics has become’.⁴ An independent inquiry will help rebuild the public’s trust in our public institutions of police and government. Following the publication of the Hillsborough Independent Panel report in 2012 public support for an Orgreave inquiry has grown. **It is the same police officers who were involved in covering up what really happened at Hillsborough who have worked to cover up the truth about Orgreave.** On release of the report both the Prime Minister, David Cameron and Labour Leader, Ed Miliband apologised for government failures to get to the truth. **Former Home Secretary Jack Straw** commented: *‘The Thatcher government – because they needed the police to be a partisan force, particularly for the miners strike and other industrial troubles – created a culture of impunity in the police service. They really were immune from outside influences and they thought they could rule the roost and that is what we absolutely saw in South Yorkshire.’*⁵ Many individuals have given us their support and numerous local councils, trade union branches, trades councils and political parties passed resolutions and sent letters to successive Home Secretaries calling for an Orgreave Inquiry.
17. The OTJC is committed to working to shape and facilitate an inquiry of truth and justice.

3. IPCC decisions on matters relating to the policing of events at Orgreave coking plant in 1984 (IPCC Decisions), p.4.

4. *The Guardian*, ‘You’re right to be anti-Westminster’: anger at UK politics is justified, says Starmer – video via Reuters, 4 January 2024.

5. BBC News, Hillsborough files: Reaction to release of government papers, 13 September 2012.

JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED

18. For too long the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (‘OTJC’), trade unions, MPs and other public figures have sought justice for the victims of police violence, lies and cover-ups both at Orgreave on 18 June 1984 and throughout the wider strike. Within weeks of the strike starting, Tony Benn MP called for an emergency debate in the House of Commons on the conduct of the police. In the immediate aftermath of Orgreave, Labour MPs raised questions in Parliament into violent policing and breaches of operational independence. In 1985, following the collapse of the cases against the miners, several Labour MPs, who had supported the miners throughout the year-long strike, along with the NUM called again for an inquiry.
19. Until now campaigners have been brushed aside by government. This is similar to how the Post Office sub-postmasters were treated until January 2024 when an ITV Drama catapulted their cause into the national consciousness. That it took a fictional representation of the facts to secure justice long campaigned for and denied is a further travesty of justice. Hopefully the lessons learnt will include the need to raise standards and provide better access to justice for those who have experienced injustice at the hands of the State, such as at Orgreave in June 1984.

20. As we approach the 40th anniversary of Orgreave, a series of documentaries and articles have highlighted the shocking injustice, often drawing on newly discovered documentary evidence. Much of this is based on the police and government's own records, and raises further questions around the role of the police at Orgreave and throughout the year long strike. These include whether the National Reporting Centre (NRC) which publicly co-ordinated the movement of police from one region to support another was in fact a de facto national police force that gathered intelligence at the direction of the government.
21. Despite these questions many files remain unexamined or embargoed, including those of the South Yorkshire Police, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO; forerunner to the National Police Chiefs Council, NPCC) and Government. To get the whole truth, questions need to be answered in the inquiry about planning, police tactics, mutual aid, the NRC's role, charging decisions, funding, the security services, special branch, media reporting and – most importantly – government intervention in the strike and the management of Orgreave.
22. The miners' strike led to a massive breakdown of trust in the police in the former mining communities that continues in the present day among the children, grandchildren, families and friends of the miners. Orgreave also marked a turning point in the policing of public protest with extended government interference in operational policing and industrial relations which continues to this day. With no accountability for the policing of Orgreave, a message was sent to the police that they could employ violence and tell lies with impunity. We believe that this set a culture where accountability in public service is all but absent resulting in the poor standards exhibited today through numerous police forces in special measures and the 'Partygate' scandal in Whitehall.
23. It is important to remember that miners were decent people who worked hard for the country. The pit created jobs within the community and a thriving local economy. Prior to the miners' strike the NUM had achieved better safety, security and pay for the miners working in dangerous conditions to fuel the nation's industries. The camaraderie 'down the pits' stemmed from the nature of the work and relying on each other to stay safe. Above ground, the men and their families socialised together, their children grew up together, families laughed together and gave support as needed. During the 1984/5 strike the miners were fighting not for pay but for their livelihoods and the quality of life of future generations.
24. Soon after the strike most coal mines closed sparking a general deindustrialisation of mining areas, associated industries and the wider UK economy. Privatisation of nationalised industries and outsourcing of public services led to growing unemployment and a steady increase in social deprivation and inequality across Britain. These socioeconomic changes were set out in a secret plan in 1977 by a free-market MP Nicholas Ridley when the Conservatives were in opposition. When Mrs Thatcher came to power, she instructed her government to prepare, plan and effect the Ridley plan in secret.⁶ His report advocated '*Trying to provoke a battle in a non-vulnerable industry where we can win*'. '*This is what happened when we won against the Postal Workers in 1971. A victory could win industries like the railways, BLMC, the Civil Service and Steel. A victory on the ground of our choosing would discourage an attack on more vulnerable grounds*'. '*The most likely area is coal*'. The Ridley report also acknowledged the devastation that such an approach

6. <https://otjc.org.uk/ridley-plan/>

would cause in towns with steelworks, coalmines and ports. At one meeting the Energy Secretary, Peter Walker, reported to the Prime Minister that the manpower reduction would bite heavily in particular areas, two thirds of Welsh miners would become redundant, 35% of miners in Scotland, 48% in the North East, 50% in South Yorkshire and 46% in the South Midlands.⁷

25. The Ridley Plan to destroy nationalised industries and trade unions required, *'dealing with the problem'* by involving *'the police; the predicted implementation of the policies included having a large mobile squad of police which "should enable us to hold the fort until the long-term strategy of fragmentation can begin to work"'. Those who opposed the rundown of their industry would be categorised as a threat to freedom and democracy, to law and order and to national security; "the enemy within"'*.⁸
26. Although the Ridley plan was leaked and published by the *Economist* in 1978, the additional preparations by the Conservative Government in the early 1980s to continue to enforce the plan was not generally known until recently. The result of the implementation of this plan: longevity of unemployment, a lack of opportunity for young people, deprivation, debt, and poverty.
27. For the miners it also meant ongoing physical and psychological problems. Many lost their jobs, their marriages and relationships and were left with a sense of grievance at their unjust treatment that haunts them even today. Drug use and suicides were prevalent in former mining heartlands. The 2020 Independent Review into policing of the Scottish miners during the 1984/5 strike found:

*'Men reported being crushed by the combined loss of work, employability, income, family, self respect and dignity. Some men suffered nervous breakdowns and some even committed suicide, such illness and death attributed by men and their family members to the events of 1984/85 and the lasting consequences of the Strike.'*⁹
28. The findings of the IPCC in its 2015 scoping exercise, recognised that there is a matter of public importance to be investigated. Overall, the IPCC recognised the seriousness of the matters in issue and the failings of the legal processes to date. The reasons it has given for not investigating the issues further relate largely to its own limited remit (its focus on police disciplinary issues, which would be of limited reach here given that many of the officers have retired), its limited resources, the fact that the IPCC is not equipped to conduct as broad an investigation as a Hillsborough Independent Panel and that it was also required to investigate a 'rapidly increasing' number of current matters.¹⁰
29. Labour has confirmed that they want to 'restore standards in public life' thus drawing a line between themselves and the Conservative Government approach to governance. A truth and justice inquiry is an issue for everyone, particularly former mining communities, across the UK.
30. By immediately confirming the inquiry into this high-profile injustice any government in waiting will demonstrate distance from the ongoing cover up of what happened at Orgreave in 1984 which exemplifies the systemic governance failures of the last decade.

7. Opening Statement on behalf of the National Union of Mine Workers to the Undercover Police Inquiry, 26 October 2020.

8. Opening Statement on behalf of the National Union of Mine Workers to the Undercover Police Inquiry, 26 October 2020.

9. *The Scottish Government, Independent Review – Impact on communities of the policing of the miners' strike 1984 – 5*, p.43.

10. IPCC Decisions, p.5.

A LONGSTANDING COVER UP OF PUBLIC CONCERN

31. The evidence available on Orgreave and related events undoubtedly meets the threshold under Section 1 of the Inquiries Act 2005 for a statutory public inquiry.

A Minister may cause an inquiry to be held ... in relation to a case where it appears to him that:

- a) *Particular events have caused, or are capable of causing, public concern, or*
 b) *There is public concern that events may have occurred.*

32. As a nation we are taught to believe in government, the police and the news. For many, the events at Orgreave on the 18th June 1984 and scenes witnessed throughout the 1984/5 miners' strike shattered that belief. For many others the truth remains hidden as the false narrative and vilification of the miners at Orgreave persists. The 2017 release of Home Office files by then Home Secretary Amber Rudd and other police and government documents found in the National Archive do nothing 'to allay public concern and to enable those personally affected to achieve closure' as the Home Office Treasury solicitor claimed it would do.¹¹ These files raise more questions that only a robust investigation can piece together and resolve.

11. Home Office Treasury Solicitor (GLD) Letter to Birnberg Peirce on behalf of OTJC, 13 January 2017.

33. The revelation that former Home Secretary Rudd reportedly said that an inquiry into Orgreave would 'slur the memory of Margaret Thatcher' raises another question: as the Thatcher government had a public face of 'non-involvement' in Orgreave and the 1984/5 miners' strike, 'why' would her memory be tarnished by scrutiny of the same?¹²

12. *The Mirror*, Top Tories blocked Orgreave inquiry 'because it would tarnish Thatcher's memory', Mickey Smith, 4 October 2021.

34. It is the belief of the OTJC that the rejection of an inquiry by Home Secretary Rudd in 2016 was a further cover up of the political interference that took place before and during the miners' strike. We believe this cover up includes the government's interference in operational policing, police financing, charging levels, and the courts. It also covers up the creation of a manual of paramilitary-style tactical options, a number of which were deployed for the first time at Orgreave.

35. While the existence of the manual was revealed by Assistant Chief Constable Clement, the officer in charge at Orgreave, in 1985 during a trial of miners for riot, it was only partially disclosed, and so the Home Office role in its creation remained hidden until very recently. In a letter from Birnberg Peirce Solicitors on behalf of OTJC to the Home Secretary, dated 19 December 2016 it was stated:

*'The interaction of the government and police at every level, including the way in which the police were deployed in manoeuvres, tactics and weaponry emanating it was said at the time, from an ACPO manual. It is the belief of the OTJC that any inquiry by the Secretary of State into its submission on the use of militarised police on the day, would undoubtedly have pointed to Home Office involvement. Failures in the interrelationship of government with the police and their history are of as critical importance today as they were in 1984 not only because many of the tactics as pointed out in the OTJC submission remain at the core of public order policing but all the more so because their origins and government endorsement have to date remained hidden.'*¹³

13. Letter to Home Secretary from Birnberg Peirce Solicitors on behalf of OTJC 19 December 2016, p.17.

36. Since this letter, a book *Charged: How the Police Try to Suppress Protest* (Foot and Livingstone, 2022, Verso) confirms our long-held suspicion that the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) wilfully breached the line of

operational independence. In the early 1980s the Home Office, civil servants and the Association of Chief Police Officers colluded to create a new police operational tactics manual for deployment at protest. The manual, created in secret, substantially increased police public order powers without any parliamentary scrutiny. It was instigated and signed off by the Home Office. Parliament knew nothing about it.

37. Whilst, following the Brixton riots of 1981, Home Secretary William Whitelaw publicly supported Lord Scarman’s liberal recommendations, he nonetheless secretly sanctioned the manual.¹⁴ The manual was classified so only ACPO officers (at the very top of the police force) were aware of this ‘fundamental’ shift in the policing of protest.¹⁵ Even rank and file police officers were unaware.
38. Within a year of the Home Secretary’s approval some of the new tactics – including the use of horses, dogs, short shields and truncheons – were deployed at Orgreave but Parliament remained in the dark as to their existence and provenance.¹⁶
39. Short shields and truncheons were used for the first time at Orgreave on 18 June 1984; a tactic in the manual that enabled the police to ‘*incapacitate*’ protesters simply for their presence.¹⁷
40. Concerns that the police were used by the Government ‘to enforce the civil law’ were first raised in Parliament on 19 June 1984 by Labour MP, Gerald Kaufman. If true, establishing who authorised the police getting involved in civil matters and the impact of this on our democracy is important to consider.¹⁸
41. The crucial shift in public order policing applied at Orgreave redefined what amounted to ‘reasonable force’ by the police. It opened the door for the police to go beyond a ‘traditional method of policing’ with impunity during the miners’ strike and after. ACPO said at the time that such a ‘fundamental change would inevitably lead to erosion of the current image and acceptability’ of the police service. With the scandals surrounding a number of police forces in England and the amount of compensation paid out to protesters injured by police since, the ACPO prophesy has borne true.
42. Government files released after 30 years confirm that the ‘appropriate steps to prepare’ for and win a strike against the miners was deliberate. These papers provide the shocking realisation of the enormity of the government’s involvement, long before the visible examples of the destruction of the rule of law that were to follow. They include analysis three years before the strike of the government’s ‘endurance potential for the future’ and a recognition of the importance of the policing operation to keep a supply of coal flowing during a strike. The extent to which the Prime Minister involved herself and her government in strategising and planning for ‘withstanding’ a coal dispute, the militarisation of the police and other police operational matters have been identified to some extent, giving the inquiry a further head start.¹⁹ However only an inquiry can call for embargoed files to be released to fully understand the degree of government intervention.
43. The extent to which the Home Office and other government departments ran roughshod over parliamentary process – and the subsequent impact of that – should also be subject to an inquiry.

14. *Charged How the Police Try to Suppress Protest* (Matt Foot, Morag Livingstone, Verso, 2022), pp.1-9. ('Charged')

15. *Charged*, p.3.

16. *Charged*, p.3 and pp.39-65.

17. *Charged*, p.41.

18. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1984-06-19/debates/cbbb48ba-6e00-46e5-8006-88519ce33444/CoalIndustryDispute>

19. *Charged*, p.43.

44. As the NUM submitted to the Undercover Police Inquiry in their Opening Statement:

29. No minister or ministry has accepted responsibility for the actions of police officers in 1984/1985 despite the clearest evidence that it was the Government itself that intended to manipulate the way in which the strike was policed. What was presented was the police acting under their own discretion. Within the extant scraps of records there is nevertheless evidence of continuous pressure put on senior ministers in respect of the actions of the police.

30. Ministers were told that the line to take was that the dispute should be seen as a matter of law and order – although quick to condemn claimed violence of miners and praise police for their efforts. Lord Whitelaw, March 1984, said “The Government’s interests will continue to be best served by its policy of non-involvement in the dispute leaving the industrial relations aspect for the NCB and the public order aspects to be “dealt with as a police matter”.

31. The disclosed files show repeatedly covert interventions made by ministers. In response to the Prime Minister’s complaint that insufficient arrests were being made, the Home Secretary replied that his department had alerted police chiefs to the extent of their powers and that he was not satisfied with their response. (The minutes of that meeting add that the Home Secretary believed he had gone to the limits of what a Home Secretary could do while respecting the constitutional independence of police forces). Yet the Prime Minister considered the matter should be discussed again at Cabinet, when it would be clearer whether the police were adopting the more vigorous interpretation of their duties which was being sought.

32. The Prime Minister and Ian MacGregor expressed dismay at police operations on the picket line and called on the Home Secretary to make arrangements to step up measures against miners; in parallel the government was demonising miners for their actions, portraying them as an uncivilised violent mob, affording no recognition of law abiding, tax paying citizens engaged in a justified industrial dispute with the right to protest.²⁰

45. Operational independence of the police is a cornerstone of the separation of powers in our democracy. From 1984 until now, government and opposition parties have publicly stated there is operational independence of the police particularly after protests that turn violent. Government involvement in operational matters prior to and at Orgreave is a matter of grave public concern as it indicates that the Thatcher government circumvented the checks and balances in place and influenced operational policing at Orgreave.

20. Opening Statement on behalf of the National Union of Mine Workers to the Undercover Police Inquiry, 26 October 2020.

“ Violence will not succeed for the police and courts will not bow to it. They are the servants, not of government, but of the law itself. [Hear, hear and applause.]
Mrs Thatcher, Lord Mayor’s Banquet speech, 12 November 1984

”

INQUIRY FORMAT

46. The events at Orgreave of 18 June 1984 represent what happened in many mining areas across the UK throughout the strike. Understanding these events is thus pivotal in addressing the present day ‘**public concern caused by these particular events**’ as well as the ‘**public concern that events may have occurred**’ as set out in the Inquiries Act. This includes:
- a. **Public concern caused by these particular events** such as:
 - i. the provenance and legal authority of the ACPO tactics manual;
 - ii. the reasonableness of the police tactics deployed, proportionate to events;
 - iii. the build-up of violent policing and arrests of miners at Orgreave from late May 1984;
 - iv. the manner in which horses, dogs and other tactics were deployed;
 - v. the overstepping of police into enforcing civil law; and
 - vi. the legality of orders to charge with truncheons and short shields to ‘incapacitate’ protesters for being there.
 - b. **Public concern that events may have occurred** such as:
 - i. The level to which the Prime Minister and her government were influencing the strike and policing, while publicly stating a policy of ‘*non-involvement*’.
 - ii. Government involvement in policing and other operational matters in relation to Orgreave.
 - iii. Checks and balances of police and government may have been circumvented in relation to the National Reporting Centre (NRC), Mutual Aid, funding, police tactics, operations and the legal basis on which such a ‘fundamental’ shift in operational tactics were introduced to the UK.
47. Public concern extends to the present day as many of the tactics used in public order situations today have their origin in the questionable secret tactics manual. For example, horses have been used in controversial circumstances on many protests since 1984, including a series of horse charges against students in 2010, and most recently in 2020 on a Black Lives Matter protest. These events all find their origin in matters relating to Orgreave.
48. There is no doubt that the events at Orgreave in June 1984 meet the threshold for a public inquiry. However, due to the relative expense and, frankly, the age and poor health of the former miners seeking truth and justice, any forum that (i) expediently resolves to confirm the truth; (ii) works to provide justice for those communities impacted and; (iii) has the power to do so, would be welcome, providing they have the power to:
- a) Compel all relevant files to be released.
 - b) Secure personal witness statements from those in police, government, other public servants and the miners.
 - c) Gather all the facts to pull a matrix together about what happened.
 - d) Determine how and why events at and around Orgreave were allowed to happen.
 - e) Independently consider policing alongside the role of other bodies including ACPO, the government and media.
 - f) Recommend what needs to be done to prevent such events happening again.

49. The Bishop of Sheffield has previously suggested an Independent Panel in a format similar to Hillsborough, but then Home Secretary Sajid Javid refused the Bishop’s request. The OTJC would support the inquiry having such powers as the Hillsborough Panel did.
50. As recently as January 2024, the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) recognised ongoing ‘public concern about the events at Orgreave’. They too consider the ‘appropriate process to determine exactly what occurred – and why – would be an independent and objective assessment’ of the SYP materials and ‘any others available at the time.’²¹
51. While the location of many police and government files have been identified, a substantial number of files are not accessible to the public, or remain under embargo, for example at the Cabinet Office and in ACPO’s archives in Hull. Despite efforts to unearth them, the planning documents and operational orders for the policing of Orgreave remain hidden. To reassure communities across the UK and particularly in the former mining communities **all files relating to police and government** strategy, planning and implementation of the policing at Orgreave should be included in the independent inquiry review.
52. The OTJC believes that:
- a) Successive Conservative Governments’ approach over the last forty years to reject calls for an inquiry into policing at Orgreave have exacerbated a coverup of their role in the strike;
 - b) The Thatcher government and senior police officers willingly circumvented the legal governance protections to avoid accountability.
 - c) This culture of acting with impunity continues into the present day and has become normalised in public life.

21. South Yorkshire Police statement, Channel 4, *The Battle for Britain*, Episode 2, 25 January 2024.

To address these concerns it is important the inquiry has a high level of authority to compel the identification and release of all files relating to Orgreave.

53. Kate Flannery, Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign Secretary:

‘The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign submitted detailed and compelling evidence to the Home Office about why an inquiry should take place into the state sanctioned police riot at Orgreave on 18th June 1984. Striking miners were violently assaulted, 95 miners were arrested to be later acquitted by the court due to police lies and fabricated evidence. ... No one in the police or government has ever been held to account for what the government directed and the police did. This is a serious threat to our already declining democracy.’

54. The OTJC would welcome a prominent, suitably resourced and collaborative investigation. The campaign believes this is essential to address the false narrative surrounding the violent policing at Orgreave in June 1984, the ongoing impact on communities, and the respective roles of police, government and media.

Descendant of a coal mining family: *‘the actions of the then Government with the police force ... to crush legitimate protest and strike action, combined with perjury and assault was and remains a national disgrace ... the wounds and divisions created are still raw and present today.’*²²

22. The 2015 Submission on behalf of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC Submission 2015) p.45.

OVERARCHING QUESTIONS FOR THE INQUIRY:

55. The OTJC would welcome the opportunity to help develop the scope and subject areas that the Orgreave inquiry is to address with, we suggest, the overarching questions being:

- Why did it happen?
- What happened?
- Who holds accountability for the specific events at Orgreave and for the decisions directly or indirectly given to the police?
- Were checks and balances circumvented in relation to policing at Orgreave?
- What impact did such decisions and events have on operational policing post the miners' strike?
- What was the impact of the political interference during and post-strike?
- What can be done to prevent this happening again?

Section 2:

Events relating to Orgreave

Oh, that's awful! Oh, we shouldn't do that.
The Queen, 18 June 1984, used 'words to this effect' – as reported

... Up until that day I had respect for what the police had to do in [their] job, but after the beating I took for doing nothing more than exercising my right to a [peaceful] protest, I have never been able to trust the police since.
Miner at Orgreave 1984

Picket laying down in front of police with riot shields at Orgreave, 18 June 1984. © Martin Jenkinson



56. The 1984–5 miners’ strike started on 6 March 1984 after miners took national industrial action against colliery closures announced by the National Coal Board (NCB). The NCB, a nationalised industry, announced that twenty pits were to close with the loss of 20,000 jobs. The Conservative Government led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher denied there was a plan for further pit closures. Records officially released after the strike confirm what the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) were saying during the strike. These documents show the NCB had a plan to close seventy-five pits with the loss of nearly 70,000 jobs. Thatcher had full knowledge of the plan, having been briefed at a secret 10 Downing Street meeting in September 1983, the record of which was ‘not to be photocopied or circulated outside [her] private office’. During the strike, Home Secretary Leon Brittan stated that police operations were the responsibility of chief officers. The government of the day consistently stated that they were not involved in the strike.

ORGREAVE 18 JUNE 1984

57. The IPCC Review summary of events states, ‘Events at Orgreave, a coking plant near Sheffield and Rotherham from which British Steel’s furnaces in Scunthorpe were supplied, were seen by many as being pivotal during the dispute. Initially the NUM had agreed coke could continue to be supplied during the strike to prevent the furnace linings cooling down and being damaged. However the NUM came to believe that this ‘dispensation’ was being abused and picketing to prevent further shipments started on 23 May 1984.’²³
58. The NUM strategy was that if miners’ could stop coke supplies, they might be able to impact steel production for manufacturing plants across the country, and increase their negotiating power. The mass picket at Orgreave on 18 June 1984 was called on behalf of the NUM by its president, Arthur Scargill, the general secretary Peter Heathfield, regional leaders Mick McGahey (Scotland) and Emlyn Williams (Wales) and others on the executive. The hope for Orgreave was a repeat of the success at Saltley that Scargill had helped organise in 1972.²⁴
59. Overbearing and violent policing of pickets at Orgreave in South Yorkshire started near the end of May. On 29 May, long shields were deployed for the first time during the miners’ strike, police horses were also used three times. According to Sheffield Police Watch, horses were sent in ‘entirely without provocation’ to move the crowd ‘with the help of dogs’. They concluded that the use of horses three times ‘prior to any disturbance’ must have been a ‘calculated’ decision. The next day, Arthur Scargill was arrested for obstruction at Orgreave, as were a number of other miners.²⁵
60. On Monday, 18 June 1984, approximately 6,000 police confronted 6,000 pickets at Orgreave. Many of the police were in riot gear, joined by fifty-eight dogs and forty-two horses.
61. The terrain at Orgreave favoured the police. Bernard Jackson, former president of a branch of the National Union of Miners at Wath Main colliery in South Yorkshire, was ushered into a cornfield with others from his pit. At the field’s bottom border, lines of police flanked the Orgreave plant. As Jackson looked towards them, the road on the left was lined with police dogs and their handlers; the thick line of trees and bushes on the other side hid a branch siding, where mounted police and dogs were deployed; and a steep embankment down to the main railway line was to his back.

23. Annex 1: IPCC review of matters relating to the policing of events at Orgreave coking plant in 1984, (IPCC Review) p.11.

24. In 1972, during the national miners’ strike, 15,000 pickets overwhelmed the police and the chief constable in charge ordered closure of the Saltley fuel storage depot in Birmingham.

25. *Charged*, p.49.

If anything happened, the only obvious way out for the miners was up a single-carriage road then across a narrow bridge. The men in the field were surrounded.

62. Throughout the strike the police invoked extended powers to turn back miners, on pain of arrest, many miles away from the picket-lines. However on 18 June 1984 none of what were by then standardised road blocks were applied as miners approached Orgreave. A change of police tactics.
63. On the 18 June 1984, 55 miners were arrested at the topside. All of them were charged with ‘riot’, an offence which at that time carried a potential life sentence. A further 40 men were arrested at the ‘bottom’ (Catcliffe) side. They were charged with the marginally less serious offence of ‘unlawful assembly’.
64. Gareth Peirce, a solicitor for many of those charged, wrote an account in the *Guardian* of the events as they played out on a police film taken at Orgreave. The film was apparently taken for police training purposes, to demonstrate crowd control options. Shot from behind police lines, the film was not used by the prosecution when making their case against the miners, but the defence used it. As Peirce described it, you see how men arrived:

*‘from 6am onwards being escorted by police towards an open field ... For two hours, you see only men standing in the sun, talking and laughing. And when the coking lorries arrive, you see a brief, good-humoured, and expected push against the police lines; it lasts for 38 seconds exactly.’*²⁶

26. Gareth Peirce, ‘How they rewrote the law at Orgreave’, *Guardian* archive, 12 August 1985, reprinted 17 June 2014.

65. The police lines, made up of those in riot gear, were deployed by Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Clement, the officer in charge of the operation. Those at the front were holding long transparent shields, six feet high and eighteen inches wide. Behind them, multiple rows of officers in ordinary uniform stood at close quarters to each other, forming a human wall. Peirce continued,

*‘Suddenly the ranks of the long-shield officers, 13 deep, open up and horses gallop through the densely-packed crowd. This manoeuvre repeats itself. In one of those charges you see a man being trampled by a police horse and brought back through the lines as a captive, to be charged with riot. You see squadrons of officers dressed in strange medieval battle dress with helmets and visors, round shields and overalls, ensuring anonymity and invulnerability, run after the cavalry and begin truncheoning pickets who have been slow to escape. You hear on the soundtrack “bodies not heads” shouted by one senior officer, and then see junior officers rush out and hit heads as well as bodies.’*²⁷

27. Gareth Peirce, ‘How they rewrote the law at Orgreave’, *Guardian* archive, 12 August 1985, reprinted 17 June 2014.

66. Over the next few hours, as the police continued their rampage, occasional missiles were thrown by the miners. The police set out to ‘incapacitate’ miners and bystanders, as authorised by the new tactics manual, whether or not the pickets were throwing missiles. In the early afternoon following this onslaught, the pickets started to build protective barriers against the police with anything they could find from the fields, roads and rail sidings that surrounded them.
67. Placing this into context, Peirce refers to events which took place in court a year later:

‘Another officer conceded that the purpose of the horses and the short-shield officers was to terrify; if miners did not disperse when they were ran at by the

Police and pickets at
Orgreave, miners'
strike, 18 June 1984.
© Martin Jenkinson





*police, then they were eligible for arrest. This was the view of the law expressed by the last junior officer to give evidence before the riot trial was finally jettisoned by the prosecution.’*²⁸

28. Gareth Peirce, 'How they rewrote the law at Orgreave', Guardian archive, 12 August 1985, reprinted 17 June 2014.

68. The IPCC determined “At 10.30 am, when many of the pickets had drifted off to the shops, and in the knowledge that the convoy would not be returning until about 1pm”, Assistant Chief Constable Clement commenced a ‘three stage movement to the bridge’. ACC Clement and Officer 1 appeared to have given different justifications for this: Assistant Chief Constable Clement said that the movement was necessary ‘... to completely clear that area of Orgreave to stop injuries to my officers and to capture the source of supply of missiles’, whereas officer 1 claimed that “in a ‘precedent that had not been experienced before’, pickets came back over the bridge from Handsworth to attack police lines and get to the plant” (an assertion entirely disputed).²⁹

29. IPCC Decisions, p.13.

69. At 11.30 am, the police made a further move from the bridge to the brow of the hill in Orgreave village with a unit of 12 horses and short-shield officers. At 11.45 am, the remaining 30 mounted horses advanced up the hill to the village, together with the short shield unit. They then galloped over the hill to the crossroads. Many pickets ran into and/or were pursued into gardens, a scrap yard and other premises. Assistant Chief Constable Clement again stated that the move was necessary because of missile throwing by pickets. Photographic material of the road from the bridge to the village showed that the majority of missiles were thrown in response to or after this movement, rather than before it.³⁰

30. IPCC Decisions, p.14.

70. Bernard Jackson a Miner at Orgreave describes the police attitude:

*‘As the mounted men returned ... a round of applause rose from the police ranks and ran along the line from one end to the other.’ The riot police ran after pickets, hitting them indiscriminately – scenes that resulted in blood, tears and another miner seeing ‘a man in his 50s wet himself through fear’.*³¹

31. Jackson with Wardle, *The Battle for Orgreave*, p. 35.

71. Patrick McCarroll was there on 18 June 1984 having travelled from Scotland to Orgreave. He recalls,

*‘There was thousands of police and banter. Then it got all serious. The lorries had left. We were in the field, near the back. There were dogs everywhere. I was chased all the way. The dogs were barking, I ran across the railway line, away from them. I ran and ran, there was an Asda; I ran through that, there were horses chasing men through the car park. There were people hiding up trees, people trying to hide everywhere. The dogs had big, long, 30-foot leads and were chasing us, they were allowed to chase us then pulled back.’*³²

32. *Charged*, p.52.

72. The police charges, both mounted and on foot, went on for three hours. Then after a lull, the few hundred left in the field were charged again. Patrick says:

*‘I was twenty-two then, and I’m not going to lie, it was an adventure, going round the country ... At Orgreave I was terrified. Anyone that says they weren’t is a liar. On the bus back that night we laughed it off – but only later, that’s when you realise it was out of order.’*³³

33. *Charged*, p.53.

73. One officer was seen on television straddling a defenceless miner on the ground and battering him repeatedly about the head with his truncheon. Because the incident was witnessed by millions on TV, South Yorkshire Police interviewed the

officer, PC Martin from the Northumbria force. PC Martin said: ‘It’s not a case of me going off half cock. The Senior Officers, Supers and Chief Supers were there and getting stuck in too – they were encouraging the lads and I think their attitude to the situation affected what we all did.’ The case was referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who advised that PC Martin should not be prosecuted. There is no record of PC Martin being disciplined, either.

74. As well as assaulting many of those present, the officers arrested 95 people, taking them to a temporary holding location at the scene and then to local police stations. The severity of the assaults and wrongful arrests can be elicited from the following witness testimonies:

Miner at Orgreave: *‘Advised by police to go forward down the hill. At the bridge lots of miners ran past followed by the police. Someone said to me ‘Don’t run lad you’ve done nowt wrong’. I turned to see who said it and I was hit across the face with a truncheon. I was knocked into a bed of nettles. two police held by arms and I was hit numerous times by a 3rd policeman on my back and head. 4th policeman... knelt at my feet and used his truncheon on my ankles and feet. Then a police inspector came along and said ‘that’s enough, you will kill him’ to which they stopped...I was cleaned up to remove blood from face and body photographed and realised that’s why I was cleaned up...after that taken to a police station’;*³⁴

Miner at Orgreave: *‘I was at the front and then they just grabbed and hit anyone they could then arrested them’. He sustained a ‘bruised and bloodshot eye ... [from] ... a policeman’s thumb poked in my eye’*³⁵

75. One ambulance man at Orgreave recounts he *‘spent the day sitting around waiting to be called on if needed. I thought everything must have been orderly as I wasn’t called upon. I was so angry when seeing the TV news. I saw the violence and injuries on screen.’*³⁶
76. The police approach on the day and their attempt to justify their actions needs to be examined within the inquiry.

MEDIA REPORTING

77. Television coverage of the miners’ strike is controversial. The reporting on the police violence by the BBC and ITN News on 18 June 1984 was very different.
78. The main BBC early evening news had the backdrop of a picket attacking the police. Their eyewitness reporter, John Thorne, spoke of the ‘horrific’ attacks on the police that resulted from Arthur Scargill’s ‘military operation’. Shockingly, the BBC report re-ordered the film footage taken of the day, showing items being thrown at the police first, followed by the horse charge. By reversing the order of footage millions of viewers were led to believe that it was the miners and not the police who instigated the violence that day. Thorne made no mention of the police violence. Scargill was also knocked unconscious that day but the BBC downplayed his injuries, creating doubt about whether a policeman hit Scargill with his shield.
79. ITN’s coverage made clear that some of the worst violence was administered by heavily-armed riot-police upon anyone whom they could catch and that their

34. OTJC
Submission 2015,
p.20

35. OTJC
Submission 2015,
p.20

36. OTJC
Submission 2015,
p.22



Mounted police charge
miners pickets at Orgreave,
miners' strike. 30 May 1984
© Martin Jenkinson



actions were not spontaneous but part of a planned operation. In contrast to the BBC's reports, which omitted any reference to the police violence, the images that followed showed a policeman repeatedly clubbing a fallen man (Russell Broomhead). They also showed that some of the miners went to help their fellow workers who were being truncheoned – and the direction in which they were running clearly demonstrates that the 'horrific violence' attributed to them was an attempt to defend fellow miners under violent attack from the police.

80. Analysis of recently revealed material on this issue shows that:
- i. At a meeting held by senior staff at the BBC on 19 June 1984, the Assistant Director General ('the ADG'), Alan Protheroe, had said that he had had a feeling that the BBC's early evening coverage of Orgreave '*might not have been wholly impartial*'. This was such that the ADG '*felt that his often-repeated warnings against what he called 'adjectival reporting' should be repeated. It was more essential than ever for the BBC's journalism to be obviously distanced from events*';
 - ii. A report was subsequently ordered that was intended '*for internal purposesnot for public consumption*'; and
 - iii. At a meeting at Broadcasting House on 30 April 1985, the ADG said that he felt '*haunted*' by the contrast between the BBC's presentation of the day's events and amateur footage that was later broadcast on the *Open Space* programme, the latter of which painted a very different picture of the police tactics.³⁷
81. The IPCC investigation provides corroboration for the argument advanced by the miners that the BBC had reversed footage to show miners who threw missiles seemingly before the police charge rather than in retaliation for it. Questions remain around the BBC failures on 18 June 1984 at Orgreave which went beyond the reversal of film footage, including the script narrative, the omissions and a single still, selected from all the footage, showing a miner attacking the police.
82. It is implausible that the footage reversal was a single mistake and for the BBC to maintain such a position for nearly four decades reflects poorly on their integrity. This distorted coverage has been described as a 'sanitising operation of considerable proportions'. These distortions and misrepresentations are firmly embedded in the national consciousness as a result of such media coverage. There are echoes of what happened after the Hillsborough Disaster of 1989 when the media portrayed the football fans as responsible for the police failures.
83. Throughout the strike the narrative of the government and the media countered that of the miners. The ability to understand the media presentation of 'Orgreave' as 'violence on the part of the miner' will only come through a proper and public examination of what occurred. At present, 'Orgreave' for the mining community continues to represent a different shorthand: that of 'injustice'.
84. Government papers confirm the Thatcher government worked to negatively influence the public's understanding of the miners' strike. Any police statements made to the media that do not reflect the correct order of events or pressure from government on the BBC should be explored through the lens of the inquiry.

37. OTJC Submission 2015, p.65.

COLLAPSE OF 1985 TRIAL OF MINERS FOR RIOT

85. It took almost a year for the charges of riot and unlawful assembly to come to court. A year of extreme stress, anguish, and worry for the arrested miners and their families facing an uncertain and frightening future. Proud working men who once thought they had jobs for life now faced a long prison sentence.
86. In May 1985, 15 miners appeared at Sheffield Crown Court in what was intended by the Prosecution to be the first of a series of trials.
87. During this trial it became clear, from police witnesses, that many officers had had large parts of their statements dictated to them. It also became apparent that many police officers had lied in their accounts; claiming to have seen things they could not have seen or arrested someone they had not. One statement with a signature forged by a police officer simply disappeared from court over lunchtime, never to re-appear.
88. Assistant Chief Constable Anthony Clement, the officer responsible on the day, stated in evidence that he was following a police manual that 'deals with all Police tactics in relation to the control of large and hostile crowds'. Michael Mansfield, a barrister for the defence, immediately sought disclosure. This was resisted but the judge directed that some pages be provided. These covered public order operational tactics available to the police and included the use of arrest squads, decoys, mounted police, and the deployment of shields and truncheons.
89. In court ACC Clement confirmed that tactics from the manual were used at Orgreave. At the time, he also claimed that the manual was not intended for use in an industrial situation. However, Home Office files released thirty years later clearly refute this. Following objections by the prosecution, a specific defence question about the involvement of the Home Office went unanswered.
90. The few pages of the manual released during the Orgreave trial included tactics that state, 'A warning to the crowd should always be given before adopting mounted dispersal tactics.' This did not happen at Orgreave. Also contrary to normal operations, many officers were without identification numbers, something Assistant Chief Constable Clement acknowledged at the Orgreave trial. ACC Clement, further confirmed in his evidence that officers 'deployed with a round shield' were 'also instructed to draw their truncheons'. Short shields with truncheons were a new police tactic in the 1983 manual, approved by the Home Office and used for the very first time on 18 June 1984, at Orgreave.
91. The trial collapsed after 48 days of hearings, when the Prosecution abandoned the case. After this, cutting its losses, the Prosecution dropped the cases of the remaining 80 miners.
92. There was never any investigation into the conduct of the police for assaulting, wrongfully arresting and falsely prosecuting so many miners, nor for lying in evidence. Not a single officer faced disciplinary or criminal proceedings; a further area for the Inquiry to explore.
93. The contents of the manual angered Tony Benn MP. On 22nd July 1985, he sought an immediate debate in Parliament on the manual, which had never been discussed by MPs. Benn was highlighting that potentially unlawful police tactics had been

Orgreave Coking Plant.
Near Sheffield. 18 June 1984
©Martin Shakeshaft





endorsed without Parliament’s knowledge. He asserted that the manual was ‘in clear contravention of the rules that have hitherto governed the actions of police forces ... officers had been given instructions which laid them open to charges of assault’³⁸ His request for a debate was denied, but Benn won permission to place the pages in the House of Commons Library.³⁹

38. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1985-07-22/debates/e46c5d7c-0df2-49f7-a3d3-3c9fe7cfc38/PoliceTrainingManual>

39. *Charged*, pp.3-4.

1991 SETTLEMENT

94. Civil proceedings for assault, unlawful arrest and malicious prosecution were brought by 39 of the men charged at Orgreave. Many other miners did not get involved with the claim for compensation for a variety of reasons but chiefly because they were not eligible for legal aid and/or could not afford to progress an action. In 1991, and a year after the Hillsborough disaster, South Yorkshire Police agreed to pay a total of nearly £425,000 plus costs to these 39 miners, without admitting that they had done anything wrong. While individual miners received different levels of compensation drawn from this amount, this equates to an average of just £10,897 each.
95. Had those actions progressed to a civil trial; an exploration of the evidence; a finding by a court of liability might have provided an opportunity for public scrutiny of the prosecution and its evidence.
96. The IPCC Decision document states:

‘no direct evidence that senior officers involved in Orgreave conspired to encourage or instruct officers to commit perjury. It is however of particular concern that our review found evidence that the senior officers became aware, after the event, of instances of perjury by SYP officers but did not wish it to be disclosed ... The unwillingness to disclose evidence of wrongdoing by officers does raise doubts about the ethical standards of officers in the highest ranks at SYP at that time.’⁴⁰

40. IPCC Decision, p.14.

97. At the time of the 1985 trial, the 1991 settlement and the IPCC review of 2015, the police and government had an opportunity to disclose the government’s role in the strike before, during and after. They chose not to.
98. One of the 39 miners, Arthur Critchlow, has since said:

‘...we never had our say and because of that you don’t feel fully vindicated. As far as everyone else is concerned, they’ve only had the media to listen to, not the evidence in the trial. There are still people now who write into the Rotherham Advertiser saying what did they expect? They seem to have a view that we were just violent. They don’t see what happened behind the scenes, the perjury, the lying, and the assaults. We would have loved to have gone into the dock and given evidence....Every paper I read and I have them all, there’s no mention of false statements, perjury, fabrications. All that was said in the papers was just pickets cleared. They offered no evidence and all the papers said was pickets cleared... I would have rather not had the money. I would have rather there had been an inquiry and people prosecuted. If we are going to have laws they need to be for everybody. Otherwise it’s not a law. Money doesn’t make up for it.’⁴¹

41. OTJC Submission 2015, p.38.

99. Given what we now know the settlement raises questions about the police motivation to settle and whether such compensation should be re-examined and extended to others. It is the OTJC view that an inquiry is the best forum to address this.

2015 IPCC REVIEW

100. South Yorkshire Police referred themselves to the Independent Police Complaints Commission after new evidence emerged in 2012 when a BBC documentary claimed officers may have colluded in writing court statements. The Independent Police Complaints Commission's (IPCC) 2015 scoping exercise into aspects of police criminality at Orgreave uncovered a number of grave new matters of relevance, in particular relating to the manipulation and concealment of evidence in both the criminal trial and the subsequent civil litigation taken by the miners against the police. As the IPCC report makes clear:

*'The criminal law relating to a conspiracy has not changed since the events at Orgreave. Section 1 Criminal Law Act 1977 provides that the offence is committed when two or more people agree to pursue a course of conduct which, if carried out in accordance with their intentions, would necessarily amount to or involve the commission of the offence. Perverting the Course of Justice is a common law offence which existed at the time of the events and remains an offence. There is no time limit for bringing a prosecution.'*⁴²

42. IPCC Review, p.25.

101. The IPCC recognised that these were matters of public importance to be investigated further and the work it has done so far will give an Orgreave inquiry a substantial 'head start'.

ORGREAVE TRUTH AND JUSTICE CAMPAIGN 2015 SUBMISSION TO THE HOME SECRETARY

102. In December 2015 the OTJC lodged a dossier (OTJC Submission 2015) with the Home Secretary. The submission calls for an inquiry into the policing of Orgreave on 18 June 1984. The document set out in graphic detail the brutality meted out to miners protesting at Orgreave. The OTJC relied at the outset on what was then known about an ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) manual into public order policing:

*3. (2) The discovery that senior police officers, and their organisation (ACPO) had unilaterally usurped parliamentary supervision, had adopted powers and re-defined law and practice for themselves without scrutiny and had deployed them at Orgreave, since when there has been an absence of any questioning of that process of assumption of power.*⁴³

43. OTJC Submission 2015, p.3.

103. The submission had a whole section devoted to 'The unconstitutional militarisation of the police at Orgreave' where there is further reference to the ACPO manual, 'a massive volume of paramilitary and other manoeuvres ... compiled for the private consumption of senior police officers'.⁴⁴

44. OTJC Submission 2015, p.25.

104. Despite the OTJC being led to believe that some sort of Inquiry would be granted by Home Secretary Teresa May or (after May became Prime Minister) by the new Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, the call for an enquiry was rejected by Rudd on 31 October 2016. The OTJC believes that interventions from Norman Tebbit, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry during the strike, and others may have placed pressure on the Home Secretary to overturn the decision to grant an Inquiry in 2016. If true, we believe this perpetuates the cover-up of his and the Conservative Government's involvement in the strike, allowing the myth of 'non-intervention' to remain.

Striking miners and mounted police at Orgreave. 18 June 1984.
© Martin Jenkinson





105. In trying to justify her decision Rudd publicly stated that there would be ‘very few lessons for the policing system today to be learned from any review of the events and practices of three decades ago.’⁴⁵
106. Home Secretary Rudd’s response to the OTJC 2015 Submission was to ignore much of its content. Instead it was suggested that policing had moved on since 1984 (The OTJC consider this a very dubious claim in itself), and therefore an Inquiry was not required:

However, there have been very significant changes in the oversight of policing since 1984, at every level, including major reforms to criminal procedure, changes to public order policing and practice, stronger external scrutiny and greater local accountability ...

Over 30 years later, policing is very different and one of my key concerns as Home Secretary is to ensure there is a policing system which works effectively and fairly now. The policing landscape has changed fundamentally since 1984 – at the political, legislative and operational levels. The same is true also for the wider criminal justice system.

There would therefore be very few lessons for the policing system today to be learned from any review of the events and practices of three decades ago. This is a very important consideration when looking at the necessity for an inquiry or independent review and the public interest to be derived from holding one. Taking these considerations into account I do not believe that establishing any kind of inquiry is required to allay public concerns or for any other reason.’⁴⁶

107. The response from Home Secretary Rudd does not engage at all with the suggestion that the Home Office, senior police officers, and their organisation ACPO ‘had unilaterally usurped parliamentary supervision’. Thus as stated by Yvette Cooper MP, Shadow Home Secretary, ‘the coalfields have still been denied answers or the truth about what happened 40 years ago. At Orgreave, where miners were injured, arrested and faced many months threatened with prosecution, until the evidence against them collapsed, we still have no proper answers about what happened and why.’⁴⁷
108. The OTJC strongly objects to the reasoning put forward by Rudd and other Conservative Home Secretaries for refusing an inquiry and strongly welcomes the Labour Party’s commitment to securing truth and justice through ‘an independent inquiry or investigation into what happened at Orgreave’⁴⁸

45. Hansard, Amber Rudd MP, Statement UIN HCWS227, 31 October 2016 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2016-10-31/HCWS227>

46. Ibid.

47. Wakefield Express, Yvette Cooper MP: Forty years on from the miners’ strike and the scars are still felt, Jane Chippindale, 19 March 2024.

48. Ibid.

FILES RELEASED INTO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, OR NOT

109. Home Secretary Amber Rudd did release around 30 files to the National Archive. The OTJC welcomes the release of these previously retained files. However the documents in these files do nothing to allay public concern; rather they raise new questions about the government’s involvement in the planning of the strike. This includes but is not limited to: the circumventing of statutory checks and balances; the financing of the police operation; the militarisation of public order policing; the upping of charges; and interference in court proceedings.
110. These and other files found in the National Archive at Kew and the Association of Chief Police Officers archive in Hull confirm that: (i) Operational independence was breached by the government and police before, during and after the 1984/5 strike;

(ii) The Home Office instigated a review of operational policing and supported the Association of Chief Police Officers ('ACPO') in the creation of a 500 page manual including paramilitary tactics used at Orgreave; (iii) the government developed a detailed strategy out of the Ridley Plan (iv) the government took an active role in the 1984/5 miners' strike including policing, charges, financing, negotiations, and court proceedings while professing to not be involved; and (v) the government by-passed statutory checks and balances.

111. An Inquiry with appropriate powers can determine how and why the events at Orgreave happened. As it is, the material disclosed is not really accessible to the public. For a lay person to try and piece together information from different places, departments and dates is near impossible – particularly for an individual or small campaign group.
112. Home Secretary Rudd also stated:
- i. 57 files relating to the Miners' Strike 1984/5 were sent to the National Archive pre-2017.
 - ii. Files from the IPCC, South Yorkshire Police and the Cabinet Office have not been reviewed by the Home Office when coming to their decision.
 - iii. The Cabinet Office have retained files.⁴⁹
113. It has not been possible for the OTJC to identify all of these 57 files or the scope or timespan they cover. We have identified that other information is being held in locations across the country including police force and other archives in London, Sheffield and Hull.
114. A cursory search of the files in the Association of Chief Police Officers archive in Hull reveals that many of the files pertaining to the 1980s, including Orgreave and the miners' strike, have not been sent to Hull and therefore are unavailable to the public. Furthermore, a number of the ACPO files in Hull relating to the miners' strike are embargoed until at least 2066.
115. As Chair of the cross-party Home Affairs Select Committee, Yvette Cooper MP, has been very helpful in trying to identify, release and obtain relevant documents from police forces and the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC, formerly ACPO). This has revealed the location of a number of files available from police forces around the country and the NPCC offices. The NPCC confirmed that data relating to the 1984/5 miners' strike and Orgreave are held securely at their premises in London on 'legacy devices' marked 'ACPO'. These remain unexamined.⁵⁰
116. In South Yorkshire, 1,474 files containing 82,913 pages of material from the South Yorkshire Police archive remains closed. Work to catalogue and release the documents is over time and budget.
117. Within the last few years, an OTJC activist who was one of the 95 pickets arrested and charged at Orgreave, requested his personal file from South Yorkshire Police. He did this at the same time as a number of other miners requested their files. On receipt, much of the arrest information and arresting officers' names were redacted. In this particular case at least 50% of the information about his arrest is redacted. It is essential that a review of all of the information on the 95 miners arrested on 18th June 1984 is included in the inquiry.

49. Letter from Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Home Secretary, 28 November 2016 .

50. Letter from Chief Constable Sara Thornton, Chair National Police Chiefs' Council, to the Chair of the [Home Affairs] Committee, 24 April 2017.



Orgreave Coking Plant.
Near Sheffield – 18 June 1984
© Martin Shakeshaft



118. In addition, the Director of Public Prosecution documents relating to the miners arrested at Orgreave including National Archive file numbers DPP2/12384 and DPP2/12385 are embargoed until 2071. Information relating to a review of the charging information of the 95 miners is essential to include in the inquiry.
119. With a number of government, police and ACPO documents inaccessible to the public a 2017 Home Office Treasury Solicitor (GLD) letter to the OTJC’s solicitors included a submission which we contend is no longer tenable:

‘19. The extensive documentation already in the public domain, or shortly to be made available to the public, offers the possibility of detailed public scrutiny to allay public concern and to enable those personally affected to achieve closure.’⁵¹

120. This new information raises serious questions about the integrity and legitimacy of the ‘careful’ review carried out by the Home Office throughout 2016. Andy Burnham, then a Labour MP who campaigned on behalf the Hillsborough families said:

‘I find it worrying that there were immediate efforts from the very top of government to shut down any inquiry into the miners strike.’⁵²

121. The injustice faced by the miners has never been acknowledged by the State; instead it has been covered-up. Despite numerous opportunities to tell the truth in the last four decades the response from a number of cabinet members directly involved in the strike has been to deflect and to vilify the miners. From Home Secretary Leon Brittan’s 1985 rejection of an inquiry in 1985 because it would be a ‘witch hunt’ to the view expressed by Norman Tebbit’s (Trade Secretary during the 1984/5 strike) in 2016 that an inquiry would ‘give credence’ to ‘Arthur Scargill and his thugs’, it is now obvious there have been active efforts to hide the truth while at the same time vilifying the miners for trying to protect their livelihoods.⁵³

122. The independent inquiry or Hillsborough-type panel should thus have the power to compel document release and the scope to review and place their content into context.

51. Letter from Home Office Treasury Solicitor (GLD) to Bimberg Peirce 13 January 2017 p.3.

52. BBC, Miners’ strike policing inquiry ‘would have been witch hunt’, 9 March 2017.

53. *The Times*, Critics from right and left oppose Orgreave inquiry, Coates, Elliot and O’Neill, 16 September 2016.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE SINCE 2016

123. Since the OTJC 2015 Submission there have been two further representations to government including an independent approach by the Bishop of Sheffield in 2018 to Rudd’s successor, Home Secretary Sajid Javid where it was suggested an Orgreave independent panel be set up, similar to the format and terms of reference of the Hillsborough Independent Panel. The second representation was to the Prime Minister and Home Secretary in 2021 calling for an Inquiry including reference to potentially relevant papers in the National Archive and new evidence. Both were turned down on the basis of the review by Amber Rudd.

124. Since 2016 the Conservative *‘Government have not responded to any of the new evidence that has been presented.’⁵⁴*

125. Since then there have been a number of important developments which have strengthened calls for a properly-established Inquiry with robust powers:

- a. The Scottish Parliament’s review findings into policing during the 1984-5 miners’ strike to which the OTJC provided some input. This review was

54. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-28/debates/01233B44-EAEF-4759-BC0C-26F4FB-FD72D5/InquiryIntoPolicingAtOrgreaveCokingPlant>

accepted by the Scottish Parliament in 2020, and the process of a collective pardoning of miners convicted during the strike has been a significant move towards truth and restorative justice.

- b. Support for the campaign is ever-increasing and includes:
 - i. The Welsh Senedd has continuously called for an Orgreave inquiry.
 - ii. A number of parliamentary petitions and debates have called for an inquiry including a Westminster Hall Debate and Early Day Motions. The March 2024 Early Day Motion brought by 28 MPs called for a ‘full inquiry’ into the policing of the miners’ strike.
 - iii. Individual MPs have asked for an inquiry including former Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg.⁵⁵
 - iv. Many local councils, trade union branches and political parties have passed resolutions to support an Orgreave inquiry and written to the Home Secretary.
 - v. An increasing number of individuals have written to successive home secretaries and their MPs about an inquiry.
 - vi. An OTJC petition calling for an Orgreave inquiry attracted thousands of signatures and letters to the Home Secretary.
 - vii. A very high level of media coverage in response to our media releases calling for an Inquiry.
 - viii. The OTJC are regularly invited to speak about the campaign at trade union & academic meetings both in the UK and abroad.

- 126. There is ongoing high-level interest from media, documentary film makers and authors, a number of whom have uncovered information pertinent to Orgreave on 18 June 1984 in their research which can be requested by the Inquiry.
- 127. An inquiry with the correct powers and the scope to establish the truth and accountability of what happened at Orgreave will help start to rebuild trust in police and government. An expedient decision on the form and scope of the inquiry developed in conjunction with the OTJC will be warmly welcomed by the general public and trade unions who have long supported the campaign, particularly those in former mining communities.

55. *The Yorkshire Post*, Nick Clegg calls for inquiry into the Battle of Orgreave, 20 May 2016.



Orgreave Coking Plant. Near Sheffield –
18 June 1984. © Martin Shakeshaft

Police behind riot shields at Orgreave
during the miners' strike. 18 June 1984.
© Martin Jenkinson



Section 3:

Public statements v private acts

‘ The police are governed ... by the Police Act. The police are in complete charge of how they discharge their duties, operationally and the powers of local authorities are governed by the Police Act. The Home Secretary has certain powers as well. **Margaret Thatcher,** Interview, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 3 October 1984 ’

‘ The Government’s interests will continue to be best served by its policy of non-involvement in the dispute leaving the industrial relations aspect for the NCB and the public order aspects to be ‘dealt with as a police matter’. **Lord William Whitelaw,** March 1984 ’



128. Through articles, books, declassified files and the work of organisations such as the IPCC, The Home Affairs Select Committee, journalists and others the duplicitous nature of the private and public actions of government and police relating to the miners' strike has become apparent. The OTJC believe the truth about government interference in the policing of Orgreave on the 18th June 1984 has been withheld from the public and Parliament.
129. Throughout the miners' strike the Conservative Government maintained a public line of 'non-involvement'. The reality is that the Thatcher government micromanaged the strike and then lied to parliament, the media and the public. This included the secret instigation and direction of paramilitary policing in the UK, with incessant intervention behind the scenes.
130. Government and police files recently released into the public domain provide evidence that confirms that contrary to 'non-involvement'
 - a. Thatcher set up a special Civil Contingencies Unit in 1981, tasked with developing a plan to withstand a strike;
 - b. The government then prepared for the strike and the policing of it;
 - c. The government and civil servants wilfully breached the operational independence of the police;
 - d. The Home Office increased police powers in secret which the Home Secretary approved;
 - e. There was interference in court procedures; and
 - f. During the strike the Thatcher government and senior police actively ran roughshod over statutory processes that should have served as checks and balance for government and police actions.

Establishing the extent to which the government involved themselves in the strike should form part of the inquiry.

131. The OTJC believes that a number of Conservative Home Secretaries have, by denying an Inquiry, perpetuated a cover-up over the violent policing at Orgreave on 18 June 1984. This day is particularly significant as it shines a light on what was going on during the strike on every day of the year-long miners' strike.
132. The table below includes a sample of public statements of government and police versus the truth revealed by government documents in the public domain. While the intent is to support decisions around the scope of an inquiry the OTJC is aware that numerous files have still to be examined and other areas of concern may come to light.

Public Statement of Police and Government

Non-involvement of government

Publicly the Thatcher Government had a strategy of 'non-intervention'.

Parliament and the public were advised by Ministers that the dispute was an industrial one and the government was compelled only to react to events.

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

Non-involvement of government is a falsehood:

As set out in the 2015 OTJC Submission:

'Overall the OTJC believes that the 1984 papers show that, despite the government's position that the dispute was an industrial one and that the government was compelled only to react to events, there was in fact governmental involvement in the micro-management of a pre-empted industrial dispute whilst pursuing an official policy of non-intervention. This new information only confirms the suspicions of many who lived through the strike.'⁵⁶

It has since been established that there are at least two areas of government where preplanning for the strike and micromanagement during the strike happened contrary to statements made to the public and in Parliament at the time:

Prior to the strike 1981 – 1984

Far from being 'compelled only to react to events' files released to the National Archive (NA) and the Margaret Thatcher Foundation Archive confirm that from at least 1981 Thatcher worked to build on the Ridley plan produced by the Conservatives in opposition. The Ridley plan resolved to reduce trade union power by taking on one industry at a time. Thatcher established a Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) whose aim was to prepare strategies and plan for strikes in Nationalised Industries. The work of the CCU was to be conducted in secret.

One of Thatcher's aims was to avoid the same situation when after the coal strike of 1973–4 the Heath government fell:

'Thatcher instructed a study on the NCB/ NUM 'problem', emphasising the need for 'very tight security' and a plan for 'withstanding' a miners' strike. She established the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), who stated that 'the effectiveness of Government intervention would ... depend on the existence of sufficient stockpiles,' and advised her to accept the 1981 NUM pay claim to 'avoid confrontation' while the coal stocks were built up. By 1984, coal stocks had been built up and pit closures were announced. Just after the start of the strike, the prime minister received a secret memo annotated 'sole copy' from her policy adviser, David Pascall. It confirmed that endurance of around eleven months could be achieved if some coal was kept moving from the central coal fields. This finding emphasised 'the importance of the police operation in Nottingham and surrounding areas'. Pascall concluded, 'The Government now has a unique opportunity to break the power of the militants in the NUM.' It was unlikely the government could do this without help.'⁵⁷

During the strike 1984 – 1985

National Archive documents confirm that the government of the day micromanaged the strike through a meeting called the MISC101. The MISC101 was a regular meeting held at least weekly

56. OTJC p.54.

57. Charged: How the Police Suppress Protest' p. 43 ref 13-15, The National Archive (TNA): PREM 19/541, PREM 19/776.

Public Statement of Police and Government

Public Statement of Police and Government

Pit Closures:

The National Coal Board (NCB), a nationalised industry, announced that twenty pits were to close with the loss of 20,000 jobs. The NCB called the pits uneconomic.

Thatcher denied there was a plan for further pit closures.

In June 1984 head of the National Coal Board Ian MacGregor sent a letter to all miners which stated ‘that we plan to do away with 70,000 jobs; that we plan to close down around 86 pits, leaving only 100 working collieries. If these things were true, I would not blame miners for getting angry or for being deeply worried, but these things are absolutely untrue.’

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

with a select group drawn from Cabinet Ministers specifically to discuss the miners’ strike. The meeting was set up on the instigation of Thatcher and chaired by her throughout the dispute.

The existence of MISC101 was only known to a select few. Minutes were taken, however other memos confirm that not all decisions made were recorded in these official minutes.⁵⁸

In March 1985, following the end of the strike a party of invited guests “including those from the police forces most directly involved in the miners’ strike, senior staff of the National Reporting Centre, ACPO, Sir Brian Cubbon and officials from the Home Office. As they celebrated the creation of the secret manual in 1983, so they celebrated its successful brutal use two years later. Also at the celebration were Chief Constable Peter Wright and Assistant Chief Constable Clement from South Yorkshire Police, who had overseen the policing at Orgreave. And Mrs Thatcher.”⁵⁹

Public concern:

Papers recently released from Thatcher’s personal files, the Cabinet and Home Office confirm what has long been suspected. Despite public statements of ‘non-intervention’ there was both political interference in the policing of the strike and forensic oversight from the government. Senior Police were at best complicit; at worst willingly acting as a political arm of government.

The level and impact of this as it relates to Orgreave (a day that is representative of every day of the year-long strike) should be examined as a matter of public concern.

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

Pit Closures:

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) claimed otherwise, saying there was a wider plan against their union with many more pit closures in the offing.

Records obtained after the strike show the NCB’s plan to close seventy-five pits with the loss of nearly 70,000 jobs. Thatcher had full knowledge of the plan, having been briefed at a secret 10 Downing Street meeting in September 1983, the record of which was ‘not to be photocopied or circulated outside [her] private office’.⁶⁰

Public concern:

An examination of the ‘deliberate damage done to coalfield towns and villages by the Thatcher government’⁶¹ exemplified by the policing at Orgreave.

58. Charged: How the Police Suppress Protest’ p. 49 ref 42. Margaret Thatcher Archive (MTA) Cabinet MISC101(84) 30 May 1984. TNA HO 325/623 memo 30 May 1984. Interestingly the official minutes did not include the information contained in the internal memo.

59. Charged: How the Police Suppress Protest’ p. 64., MTA, Minute for Margaret Thatcher, March 1985.

60. Charged p. 42.

61. *Wakefield Express*, Yvette Cooper MP: Forty years on from the miners’ strike and the scars are still felt, Jane Chippindale, 19 March 2024

Public Statement of Police and Government

Planning of Orgreave:

'The police are the public and the public are the police.' Founder of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Robert Peel on 'Policing by consent'.

The police took appropriate action in response to miners' actions at Orgreave.

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

Planning of Orgreave

On review of the police statements prepared for the 1985 trial Mark George QC found:

*'No less than 26 officers from four forces involved in 14 separate arrests quoted the following passage with minor variations: "At about 07.55am that morning empty coke wagons/lorries drove into the Plant and the pickets began shouting "Here we go, here we go" and charged the police ranks/lines. There were both police officers and pickets knocked to the ground." Eventually the pickets were repelled and they retreated. There was however a continual barrage of missiles." How can so many officers use the phrase "repelled and retreated" as opposed to "pushed back" or "forced back" etc unless they were told to use those words?'*⁶²

The IPCC has already identified certain key gaps in the material it was able to obtain on planning. The IPCC also suggested where fundamentally important operational documents that established the policing plan for Orgreave could be located:

*'...It would seem obvious that there must have been more detailed planning for the event [than the currently disclosed Operational Order evidences], given the number of officers whose presence was arranged through the National Reporting Centre ... However if more detailed planning was recorded in a document, it has not been found during the review ...'*⁶³

South Yorkshire Police Orgreave archives have been placed in Sheffield City Council archives, but remain inaccessible to the public. It is understood that many of the planning decisions are included in this archive. South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and Crime Commissioner, Canon Alan Billings, has funded an archivist so that the archive can be professionally catalogued and digitised.

However he has also said: *'There are other archives, because SYP were not the only or even the principal police force present at Orgreave on the day.'*

This statement raises a number of new public concerns, particularly: SYP were 'not the only or even the principal police force present at Orgreave on the day'. Which force is he referring to and under what authority were they operating?

It is also clear that in addition to officers from SYP, officers from several other forces, and in particular from specialist Police Support Units (PSUs) within these forces, were present at Orgreave and played a key role in events described herein.

It is now known that the National Reporting Centre deployed 164 PSUs to Orgreave on the 18 June 1984. The logistical and welfare planning of such an operation is considerable.

The OTJC understands that of the 99 officers who arrested those at Orgreave later charged with riot, while 20 were from SYP, 29 were

62. <https://www.thejusticegap.com/orgreave-1984-when-the-south-yorkshire-police-were-out-of-control/>

63. IPCC Review, p.7.

Public Statement of Police and Government

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

from the West Midlands, 8 from Northumbria, 19 from Merseyside, 17 from West Yorkshire and 6 from other forces. It is also understood that many of the 42 mounted officers who were present were from forces outside SYP.

This illustrates the level of pre-planning that must have gone into the police operation at Orgreave, and yet all of the documentation relating to the planning has yet to be disclosed, nor is it clear that witness statements from all the officers present (in particular the mounted officers) have ever been provided.

Having regard to the number of police forces involved in providing assistance to SYP at Orgreave, and the amount of pre-planning that was required, it seems inevitable that the full policing planning documents were substantial, although the IPCC did not uncover this material.

Public Concern:

This can only be determined by the inquiry compelling all planning documents and operational orders for the day to be released along with related correspondence. This and any correspondence with government is critical to shedding light on areas of public concern.

Public Statement of Police and Government

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

NRC

NRC

NRC was to co-ordinate mutual aid at the request of Chief Constables.

In other words, a chief constable from one force would request assistance from other forces and the NRC would co-ordinate the movement of officers from one area to another.

A police National Reporting Centre (NRC) was established to coordinate mutual aid resources, a system where chief police officers request that police from one area move to another to support their forces. During the miners' strike, mutual aid officers were used to stop mass pickets who had travelled from other pits, known as secondary picketing. The use of mutual aid – moving police from their area of work to another – could itself be seen as an act of 'secondary policing', but had been sanctioned by government. The NRC was supposed to be only for coordinating responses to requests for mutual aid. However, recently declassified files confirm it had an additional role 'co-ordinating ... intelligence and disseminating it to the Chief Constables concerned'. This intelligence was shared with the home secretary, who reported to a special cabinet with senior ministers set up by Thatcher (MISC101).'⁶⁴

A number of the NRC files remain under embargo until at least 2066; this is curious considering the Home Secretary was at pains during the strike to publicise the NRC's public and accountable nature.

Intelligence gathering

Intelligence gathering

Publicly the NRC was for the coordination of mutual aid only

The book *Charged* reveals that the NRC had an additional role not revealed to the public – intelligence gathering. Intelligence information was co-ordinated and passed to Chief Constables. The NRC also sent intelligence reports to the Home Secretary who in turn reported to the MISC101.

⁶⁴ *Charged* pp. 45-6.

Public Statement of Police and Government

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

Throughout the strike an officer of ACPO rank was based at the NRC, responsible for the coordination of that intelligence. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) are a core participant to the ongoing Undercover Policing Inquiry, It is unknown if these officers provided information to or were provided information from the NRC.

In August 1984 Thatcher asked about intelligence – a report from the Home Secretary confirmed that ‘intelligence’ included agents and Secret Service operations against subversives. Shortly after this report the secret National Intelligence Unit (NIU) was established – one of its objectives was to secure convictions against Miners leaders.⁶⁵

The deputy chief constable of Cambridgeshire, who had ‘oversight of intelligence matters’ in the NRC, was moved to run the NIU. The links between the units were maintained. The secret services were also ‘directly involved in the running of it’.⁶⁶

65. Charged p.63.

66. Charged p.63.

Police Act – relating to the NRC

The Police Act of 1964 allows Chief Constables to request officers from another force to assist.

Section 14(2) allows the Home Secretary to instruct movement of police from one force to another for reasons various but including – if it appears to him expedient to do so. Costs fall on the receiving force.

All public documents and reports – eg the minutes from the 20th March meeting – show there is no intention of Sec 14(2) being used. It also refers to there being ‘no record of direction under 14(2) being made.’

Police Act – relating to the NRC

At this time the Tri-party system of governance was in place. The local councils were responsible for police budgets and hence any mutual aid payments. Publicly the government said there is ‘no record of direction under 14(2) being made.’

A Derbyshire authority letter to the Home Secretary in the first few weeks of the strike states that the Mutual Aid Police had been SENT to them rather than requested. This implies that the NRC may have been sending officers to strategic regions where coal production needed to be maintained to continue ‘endurance’ and would explain why some of the files from 1980 have not been received by the ACPO Archive in Hull or, in relation to the NRC, remain embargoed. As noted above the NPCC has confirmed they hold a number of ACPO files which are unexamined.

The question of Mutual Aid being sent to Orgreave as it was to Derbyshire should be a consideration for the inquiry as it directly relates to planning and government interference in operational matters.

Questions about the role of the NRC, MI5, the Secret Service and Special Branch relating to events at Orgreave also remain.

Public Concern

These areas of concern can only be determined by the inquiry compelling all NRC documents and related correspondence. This along with any NRC correspondence with government and other bodies is critical to shedding light on what really happened at Orgreave.

Public Statement of Police and Government

Police are operationally independent

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

Prior to the strike 1981 – 1984

Civil Contingencies Unit: In 1981 Thatcher established a specific unit to build on the Ridley plan and create a strategy for ‘withstanding’ a miners’ strike.

During the strike 1984 – 1985:

Discussions about policing were a regular topic in the MISC101 meetings. These discussions sat alongside considerations about the best way for the NCB to manage the strike, negotiations with the NUM and the success of the government’s media strategy.

At the start of the strike, the prime minister was ‘deeply disturbed ... The events at Saltley coke works were being repeated ... It was essential to stiffen the resolve of Chief Constables to ensure that they fulfilled their duty to uphold the law’, particularly as the police ‘were now well paid and well equipped and individual forces had good arrangements for mutual support’.⁶⁷

It is now apparent that the police line of operational independence during the strike is a fallacy. From formulating unconstitutional and brutal operational tactics in conjunction with the Home Office in the early 1980s to submitting false police statements and over-charging pickets.

Public Concern

The matters of police and government corruption, collusion and cover-ups are of concern to us all. To right the wrongs, we need transparency about when and how these things have been allowed to happen, not least at Orgreave. It appears Senior Police Officers were politically involved. This needs to be investigated and clarified.

Resetting the line of operational independence of public order policing is essential to restore trust in our public institutions and to ensure a democratic society.

67. Charged p.44.

Public Statement of Police and Government

No government involvement in the strike

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

Charging decisions and interference in the court process

In government papers there are examples of the MISC101 chaired by Thatcher taking decisions that mean the government works to interfere in charging.

For example: At the MISC101 Chaired by Thatcher on 30 May ‘support for the police efforts to bring more serious charges where appropriate’ was discussed. The next day senior civil servant Sir Brian Cubbon (who had actively built a relationship with Chief Constables via regular group meetings in the years prior to the strike) called the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire, Peter Wright to discuss Orgreave and the charges currently being applied. Shortly thereafter miners at Orgreave were charged with Riot which at the time held a life tariff. Questions remain: Did Cubbon, at the behest of Thatcher, up the ante?

Public Statement of Police and Government

Secret, Private and Classified reality of Police and Government actions

Additionally, the disclosed Cabinet papers from 1984/1985 reveal:

- i. The Prime Minister both before and after Orgreave complaining of too few arrests of miners.
- ii. Significant amount of pressure being placed on the Home Secretary Leon Brittan to intervene in stepping up policing measures against the miners
- iii. Concerns over police evidence being put forward were being raised at the highest levels even before Orgreave.
- iv. Emphasis on the need for publicity around severe sentencing,
- v. Indications of Ministers utilising the Courts as a political weapon of the State against the miners, including discussions over central influence on the administration of local justice in order to overcome barriers the Government perceived as existing in defeating the miners.
- vi. Frequent references to previously unknown (but suspected) interaction between the courts and the government (helping to create the climate of fear in which those arrested including at Orgreave and charged with riot, contemplated their future). Extracts from Cabinet papers confirm the impression perceived at the time by the miners, that the courts and due legal process were being unduly and inappropriately intertwined with perceived political imperatives.
- vii. The Attorney General discussing with the DPP cases which it might be necessary to move out of Yorkshire for trial either at the Old Bailey or a more friendly court.⁶⁸

It is now obvious from these files that courts and due legal process were being unduly and inappropriately intertwined with perceived political imperatives. The extent to which this happened and how successful the government was we consider a matter for the inquiry.

Mutual Aid & Finance

A promise from government to cover no less than 90 per cent of additional costs of policing the strike.

Mutual Aid & Finance

While publicly professing a cap on policing costs – from the outset – the police and government combined to manipulate the process so that effectively policing action and costs covered by a blank cheque.

It appears the government amended and expanded definitions around what could be included in a mutual aid claim, provided grants to police forces and, it appears, intentionally circumvented the statutory tri-party structure (the checks and balance of democracy) to provide additional funding directly to the police, including South Yorkshire.

Public concern

Despite the government's alleged concern about controlling public expenditure during a time of high unemployment and a volatile economy, it is now apparent that no cost or effort was spared in the attempt to defeat the NUM. This raises a number of questions over how the government were able to circumvent the statutory tri-party agreement and cover the additional costs of policing without appropriate scrutiny or oversight.⁶⁹

Did the government actively work to circumvent the statutory tri-party requirement and if so, to what extent and who knew?

68. Abridged version of: Opening Statement on Behalf of National Union of Mineworkers to the Undercover Police Inquiry, 26 October 2020, pp. 10 -12 section 33.

69. Charged pp. 60-1.

133. The above table is not an exhaustive list of public statements that differ from private actions in relation to the policing of Orgreave. However it does give an indication the work already done to uncover the truth.
134. With the passage of time the duplicity of the government and police in relation to events at Orgreave has begun to seep out and be recognised by the wider public. In this the 40th anniversary, documentaries and articles increasingly focus on the truth about Orgreave, what happened and why. From this work it is now obvious that the policing events at Orgreave on the 18th June 1984 also held the hand of government. As many files have already been identified and a considerable amount of work undertaken the inquiry will have a head start to establish the full facts about what happened at Orgreave and why.

Section 4:

What could an Orgreave Inquiry achieve?

“ Orgreave remains unfinished business ... There are unresolved questions about what happened at Orgreave, and why.

**Bishop of Sheffield
Dr Wilcox, 2019** ”

“ This [the Post office] isn't the only time it seems that whenever the so called ... 'little people' are looking for justice it takes years whether its Hillsborough, Grenfell, Orgreave, Shrewsbury.

Whenever it is ordinary working people trying to get justice, nobody listens.
**Baroness O'Grady, BBC Politics
Live, 8 January 2024** ”



Miners being chased by mounted police at Orgreave during the 1984 strike. 18 June 1984.
© Martin Jenkinson

RESTORE JUSTICE

135. Properly established the inquiry will achieve justice. Justice for those who were bruised, beaten and locked up, then demonised and disregarded for 40 years. Recognition of injustice is the first step to healing communities that are at higher risk of deprivation and crime, such as the communities in which former miners and their families live and lived.
136. Events at Orgreave have rightly led to voices of doubt in the system that should serve and protect them. 'It's no surprise that ... public confidence in the police has been on a downward trend since 2017 falling from 62% to 55% in 2020. More recent YouGov data suggests that confidence has fallen further to just 47% in March 2023.'⁷⁰ Labour's Five Missions for government include raising 'confidence in the police and criminal justice system to its highest levels'.⁷¹ **For Labour's Five Missions to be successful this change must include providing a complete picture of how and why injustices like Orgreave were allowed to happen.**
137. The genuine concerns about the pattern of deception and cover-up that characterised police behaviour not only at Orgreave but throughout the coalfields during the strike have still to be addressed in England. Injustice at the hands of the police during the 1984/5 miners' strike in Scotland achieved a review and in 2022, The Miners' Strike (Pardons) (Scotland) Act.
138. Although compensation for the Scottish miners remains under contention the Scott Review has helped to counter the false narrative put out by the government, police and media in Scotland. The inquiry into Orgreave will correct the common and incorrectly held public belief that it was the miners who provoked the violence at Orgreave; that the government were not involved in the strike; and police acted both appropriately and within their remit. The truth about government orchestration and the extent of their involvement in the strike will give some justice to those impacted.

70. Labour Party, Make Britain's Streets Safe, p.6.

71. Labour Party, Make Britain's Streets Safe, p.3.

RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY

139. OTJC submits that the key themes and concerns exemplified by Orgreave remain as live now as they were in 1984. There has never been an investigation into the conduct of the police for assaulting, wrongfully arresting and falsely prosecuting so many miners, nor for lying in evidence. **Not a single officer has faced disciplinary or criminal proceedings.**
140. There is a need for the true narrative to become public as it has for the Shrewsbury 24, Hillsborough, the Infected Blood scandal and Post Office scandal. Police and government accountability needs to be restored and enforced if trust in the police is to be improved for future generations.

RESTORE OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE POLICE

141. Truncheon charges with short shields were deployed for the first time at Orgreave. Police dogs surrounded the field and two protesters were bitten. Horses charged numerous times at static crowds. Forty years later mounted officers, dogs, shield and truncheon tactics are still deployed at protest. Questions remain as to the origins of these operational tactics, including the legal authority the police had to apply them at Orgreave.

142. Unresolved events involving the interactions between police and government that we now know breached operational independence continue to create doubt in the minds of the public that a true separation between police and State exists. This undermines the effectiveness of both institutions. Trust in both police and Westminster needs to be rebuilt within these deindustrialised communities and the wider public. The promised inquiry into Orgreave can provide the answers to these constitutional questions, giving truth to many lies told to the public and Parliament.

RESTORE STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

143. The campaign submits that there is a direct line between the behaviour of police and government during the 1984/5 miners' strike and the substandard behaviour of public life we see in the present day.
144. Examining the truth about policing and government circumventing due process and hence managing to avoid checks and balances within the UK parliamentary democracy is as relevant in 1984 as it is today. From recent events it appears that without proper accountability and transparency within these organisations a systemic culture inimical to public service has developed.
145. It is an affront to democracy that such secret, undemocratic actions have been undertaken with impunity, while falling short of the seven principles of public life.⁷² Yet some MPs, civil servants and in our police forces still think they can act differently in private than they admit in public and do so with impunity. The way recent Home Secretaries spouted 'operational independence' while involving themselves in operational issues of the police not least during Extinction Rebellion protests and the Sarah Everard vigils stems from a lack of accountability in police and government. That government officials and police continue to label peaceful protesters as 'domestic extremists' without foundation means the culture is set against democratic protest. The approach to protesters means the police are still able to act in a manner that is contrary to both the democratic right to protest and the 'policing by consent' doctrine.
146. We now appreciate that it was unlikely a Conservative Government would grant an inquiry because of their secretive role in creating paramilitary police tactics and their involvement in miners' strike while publicly stating they were not involved. Reports that the Home Secretary Amber Rudd refused an Inquiry into Orgreave because it would 'tarnish Thatcher's memory' while 'very disappointing' are perhaps unsurprising.⁷³
147. The extent to which the Thatcher government worked to negatively influence the public's understanding of the miners' strike including events at Orgreave and the media's role in not holding police and government to account we would like to see explored through the lens of the inquiry. This will help reset standards in some areas of public broadcasting as well as government.
148. An inquiry should be free to make recommendations concerning the governance and accountability of public bodies and to acknowledge the extent to which the State planned and facilitated police violence on members of the public trying to save their jobs and protect the livelihoods of future generations. In this way trust in public institutions can start to be rebuilt.

72. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

73. Hansard, Grahame Morris MP, Inquiry into policing at Orgreave Coking Plant, 28 October 2021.

18 June 1984. Orgreave.
Miners run from the police.
© Martin Shakeshaft



Section 5: Summary

“ The police are operationally independent, but the Home Secretary has a role in holding police forces to account.
Prime Minister Sunak,
House of Commons,
23 October 2023 ”

“ Preparations and plans made over the last 3 years put us in a relatively good position to withstand an all-out strike.
Memo from the Department of Energy to the Cabinet Office,
9 March 1984 ”



149. **An inquiry into events related to Orgreave on 18th June 1984 is important because Orgreave is the key to understanding what happened during the rest of the year-long miners' strike. An analysis of the events relating to this one day can provide answers to how and why violent policing across mining villages and communities was allowed to happen throughout the strike.**
150. **The injustice faced by the miners has never been acknowledged by the State, instead they have covered it up.**
151. We already know from the IPCC and our research that many elements of the government were involved in the strike while professing 'non-involvement'; that Thatcher asked her government as early as 1981 to plan how they could withstand a coal strike; that the Conservative Government actively put public resources into the implementation of this strategy; and that during the strike there was State-sponsored organisation against the miners and their livelihoods. From the Government's own archives, we read documents that confirm Parliament and the public were knowingly misled. **Government involvement in the strike and the policing of it has never been publicly acknowledged.** The extent of the involvement requires an inquiry.
152. The implementation of this plan also served to destroy the coal industry which, in 1984, directly employed 180,000 people. Miners had 'powered' Britain, providing the main energy source to most UK industries for centuries, including through two World Wars. Workers who wanted to save their industry, provide British coal to industry and the wider population through gainful employment for themselves and the generations that followed were 'rewarded' by the government with a militarised police pitted against them.
153. Orgreave marked a turning point in the strike – and in the policing of public protest. The extensive government interference in operational policing and industrial relations seen in 1984 continues to this day. Questions remain about the origins of the brutal police tactics used and the operational manual in which they were fortified by ACPO and the Home Office, in secret, in 1983. Questions also remain about their application at Orgreave and the provenance of such tactics used in protest today. With no accountability of policing at Orgreave a message was sent to the police that they could employ violence with impunity. This set a culture that enabled the police cover up in 1989 at Hillsborough.
154. That police lied to the public and 'got away with it' is contrary to the standards police officers should be held to. We are not 'after' accountability of individual officers but what we now know raises systemic questions about the behaviour of the police. We would like to understand how officers on the ground were briefed? How did the briefing come about? Why were the police not held to account by the Director of Public Prosecutions or by their own employer?
155. There is no doubt that events around Orgreave meet the public interest argument. It's not about coal. It is about a government who actively worked against a population it was elected to serve: handing the police paramilitary powers and destroying an industry in the process. By the Government failing to look after those who wanted longevity of work in the coal industry and by failing to create new jobs in energy production to replace the jobs lost; this resulted in an immediate increase in coal imports including from Russia and, longer-term, in the destabilisation of the

UK's energy security. **This flies in the face of responsible government. The result was devastating to industrial Britain at every level; to individuals, communities, and society.**

156. It also appears that in 2016 Home Secretary Rudd was 'leant on' by former government ministers who were directly involved in the miners' strike to continue a cover up. This is borne-out by indications in the media and to the OTJC that there was going to be an inquiry before the Home Secretary withdrew from that.⁷⁴
157. The avoidance of an inquiry and lack of police and government accountability continues to reinforce a culture that public servants can 'get away' with appalling behaviour. Today, police at protest still violently attack people in such a manner that, were they not wearing the police uniform, would likely result in their being arrested, charged and brought before a court. However, the established police and government narrative remains. **To help restore public trust in government and police, through an inquiry, the OTJC wants: the public to know the truth; to reset standards in public life; to reinforce the operational independence of the police; to reset democratic diligence in public office; a public acknowledgement and apology.**
158. **What is important to the OTJC is that due to the age and health of many miners impacted we quickly secure a public acknowledgement of why and what the State did to the miners and their communities through an inquiry. An inquiry of full disclosure can right the wrongs of the past and influence the future behaviour of public officials. As such, an early and suitably empowered inquiry into government and police action in relation to events at Orgreave, 18 June 1984 is essential.**

74. Mail Online, 'It's a waste of money!' Lord Tebbit slams 'ill-advised' probe into 1984 Battle of Orgreave', Ames Tapsfield and Stephanie Linning, 15 September 2016.



ORGREAVE

TRUTH AND JUSTICE CAMPAIGN



Acknowledgements

The OTJC would like to place on record their gratitude to all of those who have contributed to this submission.

web	otjc.org.uk
email	orgreavejustice@hotmail.com
facebook	OrgreaveTruthAndJusticeCampaign
X	@orgreavejustice