

## UK Government Launches Long-Awaited Inquiry into 1984 Orgreave Clashes

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The UK government has formally announced a statutory inquiry into the 1984 Orgreave confrontation between police and striking miners, a move that campaigners have demanded for decades. The decision marks a significant moment in re-examining one of the most contentious episodes in modern British industrial history, though critics question the

timing, noting it comes shortly after the new Labour government took office in 2025.

The inquiry will investigate events surrounding the so-called “Battle of Orgreave,” which took place on 18 June 1984 during the national miners’ strike. Thousands of miners and police officers clashed violently outside a coking plant in South Yorkshire, resulting in over 120 injuries and the arrest of 95 individuals, all of whom were later acquitted. Allegations of excessive police force and political interference have long clouded public trust in the handling of the incident.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper confirmed that the inquiry would be led by Bishop Pete Wilcox, the Bishop of Sheffield, and that it would examine the role of senior officers, the decisions taken at both local and national levels, the chain of command between police and government, and the fate of official documents related to the policing operation. The announcement follows years of public pressure and repeated calls from former miners, trade unions, and civil liberties organisations for full transparency.

While the inquiry has been welcomed by Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign leader Barbara Jackson, who described it as “a historic step towards justice,” questions remain over why this decision has only come now, four decades after the events took place. Successive governments, including previous Labour administrations, declined to act, leaving victims and their families in limbo for years.

From a centre-right perspective, the decision is a delicate one. While it is right to examine historical events and ensure proper accountability, there is also a risk that the inquiry could become politicised or used to stir

outdated class grievances. Taxpayers will inevitably foot the bill for a retrospective investigation, raising legitimate concerns about proportionality and priority at a time when more urgent matters, such as policing, national defence, and economic growth, require attention.

The inquiry must remain focused on facts and fairness, not revisionist narratives. A balanced approach that respects both the rule of law and the challenges faced by police officers in volatile situations will be vital. Justice must be delivered not through political theatre, but through clear-eyed evidence and respect for democratic institutions.