

Home Secretary says 'no' to Bishop's plan

Claim that independent Orgreave panel would be of no benefit is kick in teeth, says angry campaigner

HOME Secretary Sajid Javid has rejected an offer by the Bishop of Sheffield to set up an Orgreave independent panel.

The Rt Revd Dr Peter Wilcox argued that there was strong evidence to suggest that such a review, commissioned by the Home Office, would be of real public benefit.

"We had high hopes that his approach would be seen as a real chance to get to the truth about what happened at Orgreave on 18 June 1984 and afterwards," said Orgreave Truth and Justice

Campaign Chair Chris Hockney.

"It's a real kick in the teeth not just for us but for all the people and institutions Bishop Pete has approached who, like us, believe there's a real need to address this part of history so mining communities can get truth and justice."

The so-called 'Battle of Orgreave' at the South Yorkshire coking plant during the 12-month miners' strike led to the arrest of 95 miners who were charged on fabricated police statements, only for their trials to collapse because of unreliable evidence.

Neither the police nor the Conservative government have admitted liability for assault, wrongful arrest and malicious prosecutions, and not one officer has ever been disciplined for any offence.

Campaigners have been pushing for Home Secretary Sajid Javid to review their call for an independent inquiry after accusing his predecessor Amber Rudd of failing to familiarise herself with details of their case before rejecting it.

They include former miner Kevin Horne, one of those arrested at Orgreave who has spoken out about his ordeal.

"It is 35 years since the strike, and I think the government hopes we'll take this to our graves.

"If they've nothing to hide

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The Orgreave banner on display at Sunderland Civic Centre, held by Sunderland councillors, Orgreave campaigners and Sunderland Trade Council officers.

Sunderland council backs call for Orgreave public inquiry

ON 30 January Sunderland council threw its support behind the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign for a public probe into the infamous police attacks on striking miners at Orgreave in June 1984.

Copt Hill ward councillors Kevin Johnston and Jack Cunningham, who represent the former mining community who worked at Wearmouth Colliery, drafted the motion.

Councillor Cunningham said, "I know from speaking to residents involved in these clashes that an inquiry is urgently needed. Orgreave symbolises the wider pain and suffering experienced during the strike."

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Councillor Johnston, moving the motion at Sunderland Civic Centre, said Orgreave was "close to his heart" due to its impact on his family and noted the event's legacy of "police mistrust" in mining communities.

The motion - which received majority backing and a standing ovation from Labour councillors - will see Sunderland join a growing group of councils already backing the campaign for a public inquiry.

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The North's absent voices

Barry Hines' *A Kestrel for a Knave* and the film *Kes* are still hugely popular. But where is the creative talent amongst writers, filmmakers and playwrights to bring alive the drama and humour of working class life today? Chris Hockney introduces our Culture section on Page 17