



Shrewsbury 24 Campaign

**THE OFFICIAL SHREWSBURY 24
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**

Secretary: Kevin O'Hagan

Chairperson: Eddie Roberts

Treasurer/Researcher: Eileen Turnbull

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**PLEASE SIGN OUR PAPER PETITION FOR THE RELEASE OF GOVERNMENT
DOCUMENTS - WE NEED 100,000 SIGNATURES. DOWNLOAD THE PETITION**

FROM OUR WEBSITE: <http://www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk/petition/>

TO BE PRESENTED TO DOWNING STREET

In 1973 Ricky Tomlinson, Des Warren and John McKinsie Jones were sent to prison on conspiracy charges arising from the 1972 building workers strike. 21 other building workers were also tried at Shrewsbury Crown Court.

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign believes that the charges were politically motivated and that there was Government interference in the prosecutions. We are calling for the release of all the Government papers relating to the trials. The Government is continuing to refuse to release these documents under the Freedom of Information Act claiming "national security" as the reason.

Jailing these building workers remains one of the most notorious anti-trade union acts of the state in recent times. All the might of the police and criminal justice system were used against the pickets to deter trade unionists from organising effectively. The convicted Shrewsbury pickets were blacklisted from the industry and most were never able to work in their trade again.

Many trade unionists will recognise that these issues are the same as those that face us today, although the industries may have changed. Working people are being subjected to major attacks on living standards, pensions, health & safety and employment rights at work. Strong trade unions, then and now, are the only way that we can defend our hard-won rights and living standards.

We have launched several initiatives to have these documents released.

1. Ricky Tomlinson created a **Downing Street e-petition which is now closed**. We discovered that many supporters were unable to have their signatures added to the list. The e-petition site is controlled by the Government and we do not have any confidence that they will allow us to reach our target as they want to avoid a debate in Parliament.
2. We decided to launch a **paper petition** and hand it in to Downing Street. We are currently collecting signatures and would ask you to sign it and obtain signatures from colleagues, family and friends. Copies of the petition sheet can be downloaded from our website: <http://www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk/petition/>

E-mail: 24@shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk Website: www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk

3. John McDonnell MP sponsored an **Early Day Motion** in 2012/13 calling upon the Government to release the documents. **62** MPs signed it. It can be seen at: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2012-13/170>

THE BACKGROUND

In 1972 construction workers faced hostile and powerful employers, lump labour and isolated workplaces that changed constantly whenever a contract finished. Building workers, predominantly in UCATT, the T&GWU, FTAT and the NUG&MW, organised themselves and carried out effective picketing of sites throughout the country. At the end of the twelve-week dispute, in September 1972, they succeeded in winning the highest ever pay rise in the history of the industry.

Five months after the 1972 building strike ended 24 pickets were picked up and charged with over 200 offences, including unlawful assembly, intimidation and affray. Six of the pickets were also charged with *conspiracy* to intimidate. None of the pickets had been cautioned or arrested during the strike. Approximately 70 police had accompanied the pickets on the Shrewsbury building sites at all times. No complaints were laid against the pickets at the time.

At the first Shrewsbury trial, beginning in October 1973, three of the pickets were found guilty of conspiracy to intimidate, unlawful assembly and affray. They were sent to prison: Des Warren for three years on each charge, Ricky Tomlinson for two years on each charge and John McKinsie Jones for nine months on each charge, all sentences to run concurrently.

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign was established in 2006. Our aim is to overturn this miscarriage of justice. We have spent several years researching the background to the trials and have found fresh evidence to support the case. On 3rd April 2012 we submitted an application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) on behalf of the pickets to have the case referred to the Court of Appeal, where we are confident it will be quashed.

Our research has uncovered many documents in the National Archives at Kew that have been released under the “thirty-year rule”. However, we have also found that there are a number of Government documents relating to the 1972 strike that have been withheld. The Government have used section 23 of the Freedom of Information Act to claim that these documents should not be seen on grounds of national security.

Seventeen national trade unions have affiliated to our campaign, as well as many individual branches and trades councils. We have also received support from the TUC who gave a guest Blog spot to Ricky Tomlinson on their Stronger Unions site:

<http://strongerunions.org/2012/08/01/the-shrewsbury-24-overturning-a-40-year-miscarriage-of-justice/>

We would ask you to affiliate to the Campaign if you have not already done so.

The Campaign can provide speakers to trade union meetings to talk about the issues surrounding the 1972 strike and the subsequent arrests and trials. We can also provide up to date information about the latest research that we have carried out and the new evidence that we have discovered. Ricky Tomlinson will try to be available for as many meetings as possible.

Full details of the campaign, including affiliation information, are on our official website.

E-mail: 24@shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk Website: www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk