



Shrewsbury 24 Campaign

**THE OFFICIAL SHREWSBURY 24
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**

Chairperson: Harry Chadwick

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Please support us in overturning a miscarriage of justice

Campaign Information Sheet

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign was established in 2006. Our aim is to overturn the convictions and sentences of building workers who were victimised and criminalised when they took part in picketing during the 1972 national strike. Several of them were sent to prison. We have spent almost ten 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. We have strengthened our legal team to include Mike Mansfield QC, who is involved with the Hillsborough and Orgreave campaigns, to ensure the best possible case is submitted on behalf of the pickets.

The main obstacle to justice for the pickets is the Government's refusal to release key documents relating to the Shrewsbury trials. Our researcher Eileen Turnbull has discovered many documents in the National Archives at Kew that support the pickets' case. But she has also discovered that there are crucial documents that are 'missing'. The Government have used section 23 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to continue to withhold them. They claim that to release them would be a threat to national security. We believe that these papers show the extent of political interference in the case at the time and support the pickets' case that they are victims of a miscarriage of justice. Time is of the essence; we need the documents now. Six pickets have died, the youngest is now 68 and the eldest is 91.

In their 2015 manifesto the Labour Party pledged that if they were returned to power they would, "Release all papers concerning the Shrewsbury 24 Trials"

On 23rd October 2015 the Tory Government announced their intention to continue to withhold the documents from public scrutiny for a further 6 years. The next review will be in 2021.

Labour MP's who have for many years worked hard with us to persuade successive governments to release these papers are now in the leadership of the Labour Party. We are confident that they will put the pressure on this Government to come clean and release all the documents relating to the Shrewsbury trials. Andy Burnham, in his maiden speech as shadow Home Secretary said, "We need the full story about the false convictions and imprisonment of building workers in Shrewsbury". We have had meetings with Andy and Keir Starmer MP to discuss the further assistance that the Labour Party can give us to overturn this miscarriage of justice.

[The Progress of the campaign](#)

On 16th December 2013, together with General Secretaries Len McCluskey Unite, Bob Crow RMT and Steve Murphy UCATT, we served a petition at Downing Street signed by tens of thousands of people calling upon the government to release the documents.

On the 23rd January 2014 David Anderson led a backbench debate in Parliament, supported by Labour MP's John McDonnell Tom Watson and Steve Rotheram. The motion called for the government to release all documents relating to the Shrewsbury pickets. They succeeded in winning the vote 120 for, 3 against. The government's response was that the papers were to be reviewed in 2015. It is clear that the papers will not be released without further pressure on the Government.

[How you can support us](#)

Twenty-one national trade unions have affiliated to our campaign as well as many individual branches and trades councils. The TUC have given us tremendous support. We would ask Trade Union and Labour Party Branches to affiliate to us. Affiliation/donation forms can be downloaded from our website. We also provide speakers for trade union meetings. The address is: www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk

Special appeal to support the legal fund, please donate to Shrewsbury 24 Campaign Co-op account number: 65249495 Sort code: 08-92-99.

[History of the Shrewsbury 24](#)

2016 is 44 years since the first-ever national building workers strike. In 1972 construction workers faced hostile and powerful employers, lump labour and isolated workplaces that changed constantly whenever a contract finished. Health and safety measures on building sites were non-existent building workers faced dangerous working conditions on a daily basis. UCATT, the T&GWU, FTAT and the NUG&MW, were the main unions who had members in the industry. The building workers irrespective of which union or trade they were in organised 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 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 80 police had accompanied the pickets on the Shrewsbury building sites at all times on 6th September 1972. There were no police complaints 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, **Ricky Tomlinson** for two years and **John McKinsie Jones** for nine months.

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.

You can watch the January 2014 debate in Parliament here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/house-of-commons-25859595> **or read it in Hansard.**

Other online links to parliamentary debates and events can be found on our website.

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