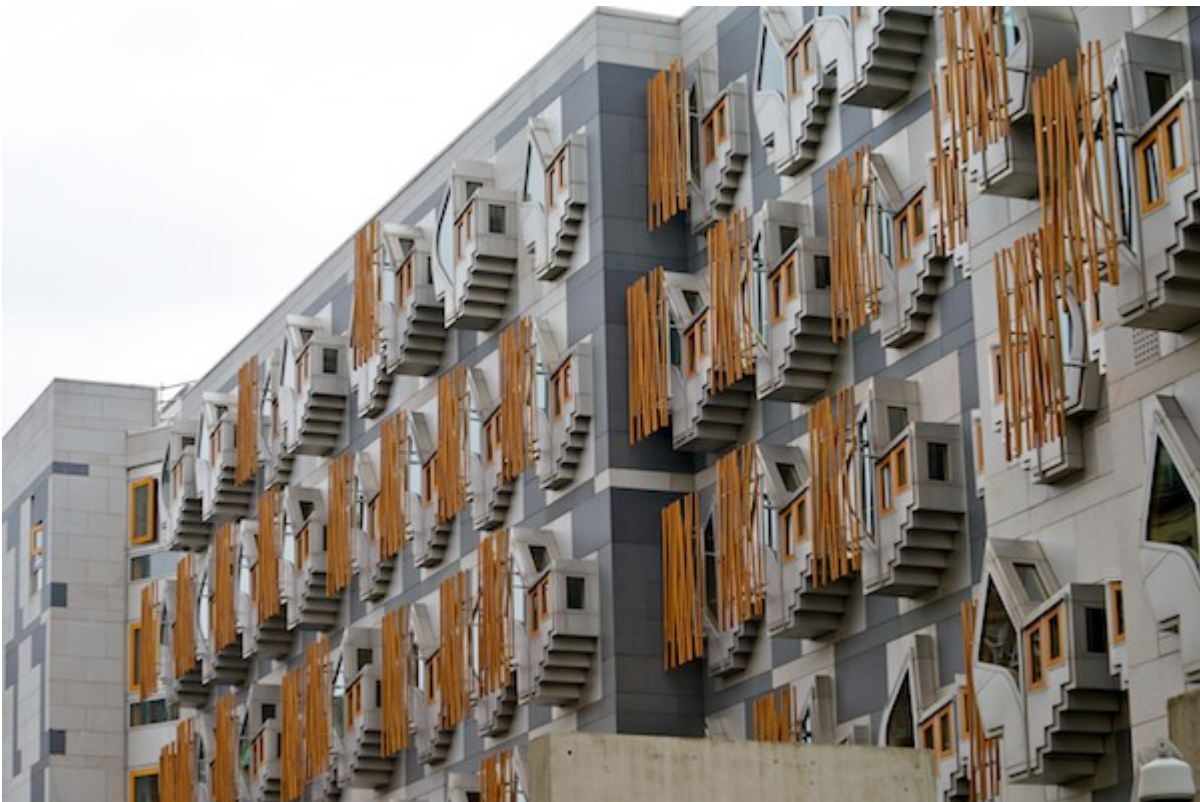


Scottish Government announce review into miners' strike policing

Justice Secretary Michael Matheson has announced an independent review into the impact of policing on communities during the Miners' Strike, from March 1984 to March 1985.



Mr Matheson has appointed John Scott QC Solicitor Advocate to lead the review, supported by an advisory panel comprising Dennis Canavan (former MP and MSP), Jim Murdoch (Professor of Public Law at the University of Glasgow) and Kate Thomson (former Assistant Chief Constable).

The Justice Secretary, who met with representatives from the National Union of Mineworkers prior to announcing the review to Parliament, said: "Through this independent review, Scotland will lead the way in ensuring the experiences of those affected by the policing of the dispute in the 1980s are

properly understood.

“This represented an extremely turbulent and difficult time for many mining communities in Scotland. And although more than three decades have passed, the feelings and scars from that time still run deep and there are questions that still need to be answered.

“I want this review to bring openness, understanding and a degree of closure to all those involved. At the same time, I have written to the Home Secretary to ask that he seriously reconsider the UK Government’s position at this point – only a UK-wide investigation could fully explore concerns about the involvement of the then UK Government.”

John Scott QC, who will lead the review, said: “Although the Miners’ Strike took place over thirty years ago, I am aware that strong feelings about it persist in Scotland, especially in mining communities. Many documents of potential relevance are now publicly available. These will have to be considered but I am also keen to listen to individuals and communities directly affected.

“I am delighted that Dennis Canavan, Kate Thomson and Jim Murdoch have agreed to assist in this important review. Each brings considerable experience, knowledge and skills which will help to ensure that our review is thorough and robust.”

The remit will be: to *investigate and report on the impact of policing on affected communities in Scotland during the period of the miners’ strike from March 1984- March 1985.*



Neil Findlay
MSP

Labour MSP for Lothians, Neil Findlay who has long campaigned for a review into the miners's strike and the way it was policed, said: "This is a major step forward in the fight for justice for so many people in mining communities across Scotland.

"More than 30 years after the strike of 1984/85 and following three decades of campaigning by many people, we now have an independent review to be led by John Scott QC.

"This is a huge breakthrough in the fight for justice and the truth about what actually happened in Scotland during that period, but it also must not shut off the possibility of a full public inquiry at a later date.

"The release of the Cabinet papers under the 30-year rule and the fallout from the Hillsborough campaign exposed how the Police and judiciary acted under the political direction of the then-Tory Government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and were instructed to defeat the strike, no matter the cost.

"This was all part of a plan to attack organised working people and their trade unions.

"Scottish miners suffered disproportionately from the impact – with just 10 per cent of the overall UK mining workforce Scotland saw 30 per cent of the sackings following arrest.

"Many of these workers lost not just their jobs and income, but their relationships, their homes and many their mental and physical health.

"Some were blacklisted and others went to their graves the victims of a miscarriage of justice with a criminal conviction against their name when the reality was they had done nothing wrong.

“I hope that this independent review is thorough, inclusive and provides an opportunity for those who were involved to come forward and give evidence so we can finally shine a light on this enormously important period in our country’s history.”