

June 20, 1984

*With Sir Edward Heath*

Dear Sir Edward,

According to the Channel 4 transcript of last night's interview, Arthur Scargill said:

"We have no intention of abiding by laws, be they civil or criminal, which restrict our ability as a trade union to fight for the rights of our members."

He added later: "I certainly do not set out to break any laws other than those which seek to undermine the democracy and freedom and independence of trade unions."



PRIORITY WRITTEN QUESTION FROM DR DAVID OWEN, M.P.

Dr David Owen (Devonport): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make a statement about what measures the Government intends taking to prevent a repeat of the violence and public disorder that happened yesterday in connection with the industrial dispute in the mining industry.

REPLY

The violence yesterday was concentrated at the Orgreave coking plant. At 9 o'clock yesterday morning the police estimate that some 10,000 people were in the vicinity. They were there to stop the British Steel Corporation exercising its lawful right to remove coke from the plant. The police were subjected to a considerable level of violence and to deal with it found it necessary to use both mounted officers and officers equipped with shields and helmets. 93 arrests were made. Of those arrested 26 have since been charged with riot. The remainder have been charged with unlawful assembly, assault and public order offences. 28 police officers suffered injuries. The disorder, during which large numbers of missiles were thrown at police officers, continued until after mid-day. Apart from the physical violence a field close to the lines of police officers was set on fire and three vehicles were removed from a local yard and set on fire. A car filled with rubble was pushed down a hill towards the lines of police officers. Fortunately it merely hit a wall. A barrier was erected in the road and set on fire.

In spite of the large numbers of people present and the violence which arose, the police were able to ensure that the vehicles due to go into and out of the plant were able to do so as required.



With regard to the possible repetition of events of this kind, no Government can guarantee that violence will not recur if there are people who are determined to resort to it. What the Government can and must do is to give the police any support that is needed in their difficult task of preventing and containing violence and dealing with it when it arises. This Government has done that and will continue to do so. The Government must also ensure that the law relating to public order is adequate and that the courts have proper powers to deal with offences against it. For the most part the provisions of the criminal law relating to such offences as obstruction, intimidation, criminal damage and riot are adequate, and the courts' powers very substantial. I do not believe there is a need for major changes in this area. But as the House will know, this is a matter we have under review.



CRANLEY ONSLOW

If called will ask:

How long can this rioting go on without the ringleaders being arrested for conspiracy?

Line to Take

Conspiracy to command a criminal offence is itself a criminal offence. It is a matter for the Chief Officer of Police concerned whether charges should be brought, bearing in mind the need to prove the elements of the offence.

BACKGROUND (for use only if necessary)

There are difficulties in proving conspiracy (and similarly incitement which is also an offence in itself), when the only evidence available is of general utterances which are not addressed to specific individuals or which do not relate to particular acts.

The offence of conspiracy is to be disregarded where the substantive offence is summary and non-imprisonable and the conspiracy to command the offence is contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974.

Reference: Criminal Law Act 1977, Section 1.



## NUM INDUSTRIAL ACTION: COALITE

### Line to Take

The stopping of coal supplies to the Coalite Company's Grimethorpe plant in Yorkshire is another example of the NUM's strike action, which is supposed to be about protecting jobs, putting jobs at risk - jobs in collieries which normally supply coal, and jobs in coal-using industries which are denied supplies.

### Background

While other Coalite plants continue to receive supplies of coal, supplies to Coalite, Grimethorpe (Yorkshire) plant ceased last week. Efforts to negotiate supplies with the NUM failed.

The plant ran out of coal yesterday (18 June) and was closed last night. Management met employees this morning. 269 hourly paid employees have been laid off. The company does not yet know whether the closure of the plant will be permanent.

Coalite has made no formal announcement of the closure but the local press are, of course, aware of it.

19 June 1984



## COAL DISPUTE

### Position of Leader of Opposition

I remind the Rt Hon Gentleman that of those miners who have been allowed to express a view the majority voted to stay at work. He came only belatedly to support a ballot and since the NUM changed its rules we have heard nothing more from him.

### His condemnation of violence

Has always been belated and equivocal. Does he seriously believe that the rate of the violence we have seen lies with the police.

### Where does he stand on the TUCs guidelines on picketing?

Can he seriously contend that 6000 people are required peacefully to persuade others?

### Where we now stand

- The position in which the NUM finds itself is quite remarkable

- They have failed to intimidate a quarter of the industry into joining the strike

- Stocks at power stations remain sufficient to maintain electricity supplies for many months to come

- No major industry has been damaged and

- despite a good deal of rhetoric and numerous well-publicised meetings of union leaders he has failed to secure the support of any major group of trade unionists.

No wonder the NUM leadership has resorted to these disruptive tactics of mob violence which, I am sure, can only serve to alienate sensible trade unionists and increase its isolation.

19 June 1984

SLHAAB