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'They really did us proud': legal solidarity and the 1984-1985 miners' strike

by Joanna Gilmore

The 1984-1985 miners' strike was one of the most fiercely contested industrial conflicts in British history. With thousands of arrests and an extraordinary amount of civil litigation, the strike transformed the courts into intense legal and political battlegrounds. While the role of law and legal institutions in undermining the strike is well documented, the contributions of lawyers in furthering the miners' cause are largely unexamined. Drawing on archival research and oral history interviews conducted by the author, this article explores the legal victories and defeats of this period, and the ongoing campaigns for justice and accountability. In doing so, it reveals the remarkable networks of legal solidarity that emerged during the miners' strike, and the impact of these explosive experiences on those who took part.

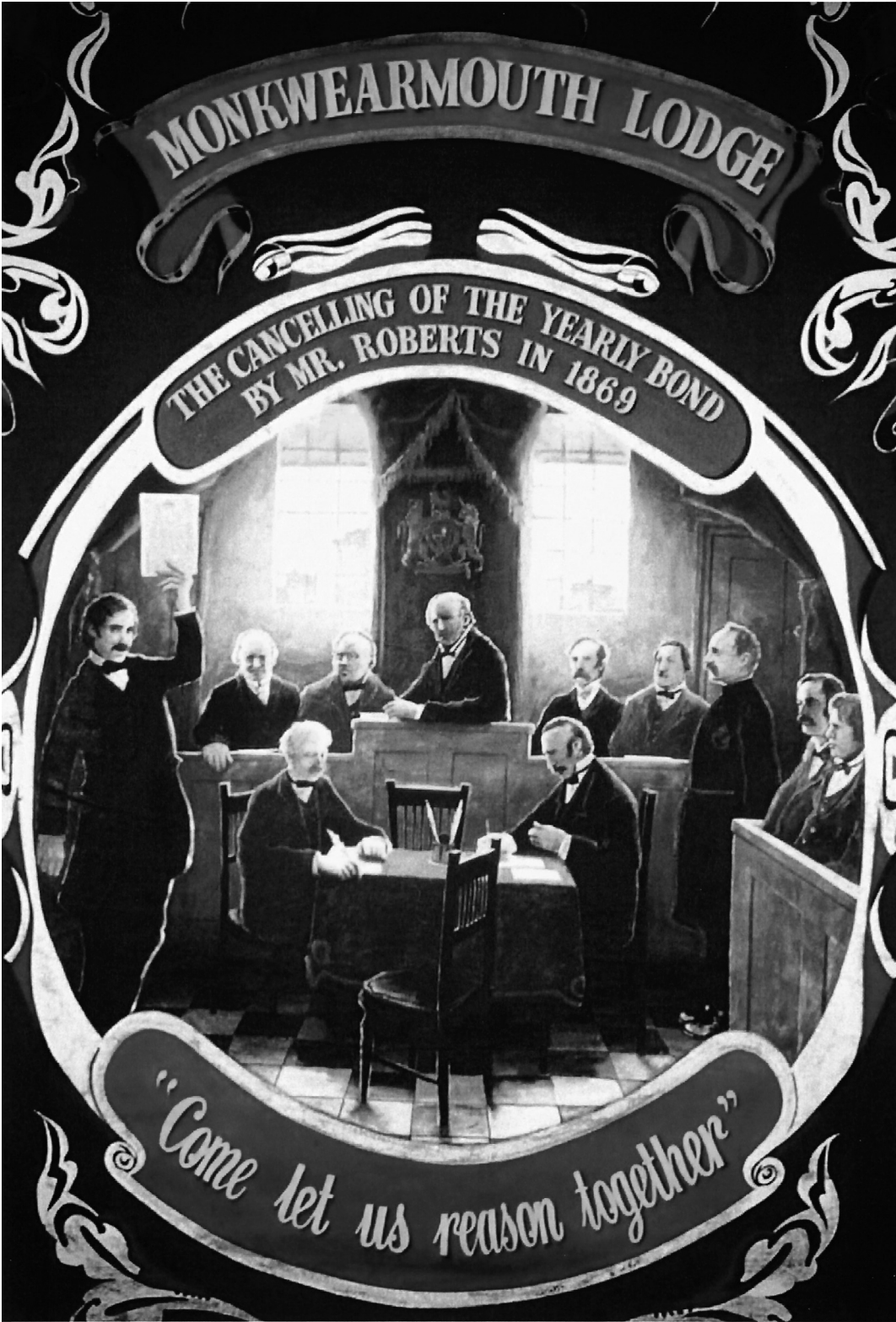
Keywords: miners' strike 1984-1985; legal solidarity; radical lawyers; cause lawyers; legal mobilisation

*Cheer up, my lads, for Roberts' bold;
And well defends our cause,
For such a drubbing he's gi'en them;
With their own class made laws.*

This verse pays homage to William Prowting Roberts, the nineteenth-century Chartist solicitor and legal adviser to the Northumberland and Durham miners' unions. Known as 'the Pitman's Attorney' for his fearless crusade against 'the King Coal tyrants', Roberts' most celebrated legal triumph was breaking the oppressive Bond system that had bound miners across the north-east coalfields in conditions of near-serfdom. The courtroom scene of Roberts' 1869 victory against the Bond, which gave renewed confidence to workers across County Durham, was painted on the banner of the Monkwearmouth Lodge of the Durham Miners' Association (DMA).

Historian Raymond Challinor suggests that while there was likely some mythologising surrounding

Roberts, the legal battles he fought significantly contributed to the labour movement of his time. Challinor's biography of Roberts vividly captures the essence of his radical legal advocacy. First, his strategy involved a relentless 'war of attrition' against mine-owners through the courts. With a 'belligerent assertiveness', Roberts challenged every case, not merely to win disputes but to systematically weaken the oppressive legal framework against the miners. In doing so, Roberts consistently 'sought to speak through the courtroom window', effectively combining the legal struggle with the struggle in the political arena. As Roberts himself put it: 'We resisted every individual act of oppression, even in cases where we were sure of losing'. Second, while never expressing a strong ideological position, Roberts maintained an unwavering commitment throughout his career to what he termed 'the people's cause'. Roberts did not attribute his legal victories solely to his own efforts. Rather, he emphasised the importance of instilling in workers the deter-



Monkwearmouth Lodge Banner. Courtesy of Durham Miners' Association.

mination to fight and organise independently. As Challinor explained: 'He believed that unity was strength, and that employers and governments had always striven to crush any such unity – and would continue to do so'.¹

Challinor's biography, published in 1990 during a downturn in the labour movement, ends on a sobering note. It underscores the resurgence of Victorian-era legal tactics under the Thatcher government and the urgent need for renewed interest in and engagement with the legal system, suggesting that 'perhaps the spirit of W.P. Roberts will again stalk the land'.² Drawing on archival research and oral history interviews conducted by the author between 2023 and 2024, this article argues that the 'spirit' of WP Roberts was very much alive during the 1984-1985 miners' strike. By highlighting the networks of legal solidarity that emerged during this period, it explores the legal strategies, victories and defeats of the strike and the impact of these explosive experiences on those who took part.

Oral history and the 'radical lawyer'

The phenomenon of the 'radical lawyer' has long been a subject of interest in law and society research.³ The term itself, however, remains ambiguous and the pathways to 'radical' lawyering underexplored.⁴ A notable exception is the recent work of Falciola, whose account of US lawyers' militant engagement in the radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s highlights their roles beyond legal representation. These lawyers actively participated in organising protests and used courtrooms for political advocacy, challenging their profession's conservative norms through aggressive litigation strategies and political alignment with their clients. Falciola distinguishes between *cause lawyers* – who work for both the left and right out of specific political or moral commitments – and *radical lawyers*, who he defines as 'partisan lawyers who stood unmistakably on the Left, joined the most combative social movements, shared their clients' substantive political claims, sought to transform legal questions into political issues, and criticised the law as an instrument perpetuating systemic injustice'.⁵ Falciola's methodological strength lies in his historical approach, utilising archival materials and oral history interviews to delve into the 'individual trajectories, discourses, and everyday practices' of lawyers within social and political movements. Although underused in socio-legal research, Bryson suggests that oral histories are invaluable for moving 'beyond legalism' by situating personal narratives within broader structural and political contexts.⁶ For Portelli, these histories shed light on 'not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did'.⁷

This article presents findings from a study conducted in partnership with National Life Stories at the British Library which sought to capture a history from below of radical lawyering during the 1984-1985 miners' strike. Combining archival research and twenty-six oral history interviews conducted by the author between 2023 and 2024, the study unveils the roles of both

prominent lawyers and 'unsung legal workers',⁸ revealing the extensive networks of legal solidarity that emerged during this period. The interviews, each lasting between two and four hours, included fifteen solicitors, five barristers, two arrested mineworkers, two members of the national Women Against Pit Closures, one member of the Scottish mineworkers justice campaign and one legal researcher, with participants comprising seventeen men and nine women. Interviewees were identified through existing contacts and connections facilitated by organisations including the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign⁹ and the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers.¹⁰ The interview audio, transcripts and summaries will be archived by National Life Stories at the British Library and made publicly accessible in 2024-25.¹¹

The next part of the article documents the formidable legal challenges confronting the miners and the strategies developed in response. It then explores the personal and political bonds forged between lawyers and mining communities during the strike and examines the personal, professional and ethical dilemmas they encountered. The article concludes by highlighting the enduring legacy of the miners' strike, the crucial role of legal solidarity networks and the transformative potential of radical legal advocacy in response to criminalisation and legal repression.

Their finest hour

The 1984-1985 miners' strike was one of the longest and most bitterly fought periods of industrial action in British history.¹² Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's declaration in May 1984 that 'the rule of law must prevail over the rule of the mob' set the tone for the legal battles to come. Home Office figures reveal that 11,312 striking miners and their supporters were arrested during the dispute.¹³ While the majority of arrests were for minor public order offences, some faced more serious charges, including the ninety-five pickets charged with riot and unlawful assembly following the Orgreave confrontation on 18 June 1984.¹⁴ The dispute also generated an extraordinary amount of civil litigation, the most damaging of which were the claims for injunctions against the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the National Executive Committee (NEC) and Areas of the NUM by non-striking miners. Frequently sponsored by right-wing pressure groups with the support of the government and the National Coal Board, one such action brought a fine of £200,000 on the national NUM, the sequestration of its assets and the appointment of a receiver to manage its funds.¹⁵

The legal onslaught against the NUM was relentless. Mass arrests, often based on obsolete and archaic offences, were part of a calculated strategy to criminalise pickets, impose strict bail conditions and erode public support for the strike.¹⁶ The aim of the civil assault, as the chairman of the National Coal Board, Ian MacGregor, later admitted, was 'to progressively tie the NUM up in knots' and to 'cost Scargill so much

NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

NOTICE OF ARREST

**PREPARED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
HALDANE SOCIETY OF SOCIALIST LAWYERS**

*If you are arrested, you or your friends or family
should contact the area strike committee.*

Name:

Address:

Telephone No.

AT THE POLICE STATION

DO:

- ★ **Ask for bail:** The police must give you bail or take you to a magistrates court for them to consider bail within 24 hours (48 hours at weekends).
- ★ **Tell the police you want to make a telephone call:** The police can only refuse if your call might 'hinder their investigation' but in practice they refuse in order to put pressure on you.
- ★ **Check the police list of your property and sign immediately below the last item to prevent additions.**
- ★ **Memorise the name or number of any policeman who threatens or assaults you.**
- ★ **Demand to see a senior officer if any of your requests are refused** (e.g. for bail or a telephone call).

Haldane / NUM Notice of Arrest Card. Courtesy of John Hendy.

money that it would reduce his ability to finance flying pickets'.¹⁷ The NUM was initially unprepared for the scale of the legal assault facing the union and for several weeks was unco-ordinated in its response. Nationally, the NUM turned to London law firm Seifert Sedley – 'a very political place' that was deeply rooted within the labour movement, recalled Jim Nichol, who qualified there as a solicitor during the strike.¹⁸ Speaking in 2007, partner Michael Seifert, who had previously represented Arthur Scargill following his picket-line arrest during a strike led by South Asian women workers at the Grunwick film processing plant in June 1977, explained that it was not possible at that stage of the dispute to predict the magnitude of what was to come: 'Arthur came to see me at the very beginning of it, you just have no idea what – some strikes that you think are going to last a long time cave in rapidly, and others that you think might be a short, sharp shock go on for months and even a year'.¹⁹ Jane Deighton, then an articulated clerk (trainee solicitor) at Seifert Sedley, explained how the firm mobilised upon receiving the NUM request for representation:

That was it. As many people in the firm as they could manage were given over to it. It was amazing. In fact, I don't think eventually the firm got paid, but there was no issue about that. It was, 'this needs to be done, let's all do it'.²⁰

As Seifert Sedley became overwhelmed by the scale and complexity of the cases, the Haldane Society of

Socialist Lawyers mobilised its members.²¹ A special issue of their journal *Socialist Lawyer* published during the twenty-fifth-year anniversary of the strike, described this period as the group's 'finest hour'.²² One of the Haldane Society's most notable achievements was organising a rota of lawyers to establish a free legal advice centre in the Ollerton miners' welfare centre in Nottinghamshire and provide legal representation in the Nottinghamshire magistrates' courts for the growing number of striking miners arrested. With Nottinghamshire effectively under a state of siege due to police roadblocks, lawyers had to travel in mixed-gender groups, as cars with only men would often be stopped and turned around by police, despite explaining to officers the purpose of their visit.²³

The Haldane Society's support extended beyond legal representation. The group produced educational leaflets and 'bust cards' detailing rights upon arrest,²⁴ and raised thousands of pounds from within the legal community to support striking miners and their families. A financial appeal sent to Haldane members in June 1984 underscored the urgent need for solidarity: 'The Haldane Society has not undertaken this sort of work before but the consequences if the miners are defeated are so serious that we feel all our friends will welcome this opportunity to make a really substantial regular contribution to the fight'.²⁵

As the legal challenges intensified, the concentration of Haldane members in London limited its reach across the diverse coalfields of the UK. By April 1984, the Yorkshire and Kent Areas of the NUM had ensured legal representation for members arrested outside their regions through solicitors co-ordinated by the local NUM, a model not adopted in other areas until three months into the strike. Initially, the NUM Areas typically relied on solicitors handling their civil cases to also cover picketing arrests. Often lacking experience in public order and criminal law, and having to depend on high-street firms to fill gaps in areas beyond their reach, members complained about the adequacy of legal representation amid mass arrests.²⁶ To secure comprehensive legal support for miners, the NUM had to mobilise a much wider network of trusted lawyers. Leeds solicitor John Davies, a member of the Socialist Workers Party who had been active in anti-racist and trade union struggles since the 1970s, recalled being approached early in the strike by a college acquaintance now working at the Yorkshire NUM offices in Barnsley. He explained:

He knew me and my politics and knew that we would give proper representation. [...] It wasn't just going through the A to Z or the Yellow Pages and sticking a pin in it. [Laughs] He had the dart worked out in advance.²⁷

A conference hosted jointly by the NUM and the Haldane Society in Sheffield on 21 July 1984 brought together lawyers, strike committee delegates and women's support groups to co-ordinate the legal strat-

egy. A background paper for delegates set out the 'formidable' challenge of providing legal representation to the miners.²⁸ The aim of the conference was to disseminate practical legal advice, drawing on the experiences gained in earlier cases of mass arrests such as the Warrington print workers' dispute, the steel strike, the Southall and Brixton disturbances, the Grunwick strike and the Greenham Peace Camp. The organisers stressed the importance of solidarity between lawyers and miners in the 'spirited and organised legal fightback' that was required. A letter from Watson, Burton, Cooper & Jackson solicitors to the president of the Northumberland Area of the NUM outlined the conference's key outcomes. These included recommending independent observers at picket lines, documenting incidents through photographs or videos and the immediate gathering of witness statements. It also highlighted the importance of pooling information on incidents involving pickets from multiple areas 'to ensure that the maximum amount of information becomes available to each defendant from whatever area'.²⁹ The conference carried a resolution calling on the NUM NEC to establish a standing committee of NEC members and lawyers to develop proposals for the legal response and to provide a degree of legal co-ordination across the Areas.³⁰

The 'legal fightback' also required accurate information about the scale of the legal assault. Scepticism about official police and Home Office figures on arrests and prosecutions led the NUM to collaborate with Bristol University researchers Janie Percy-Smith and Paddy Hillyard to collect reliable data. Solicitors representing arrested miners were asked to complete a monitoring sheet detailing the circumstances of the arrest, offence type, court appearances, bail conditions and penalties, alongside documenting any violence or mistreatment during and after the arrest. These would be collated by the NUM head office in Sheffield, before being sent back to the researchers for analysis.³¹ Researcher Janie Percy-Smith recalls that this was not merely an academic exercise: 'The whole point was that it should feed back into how things were being managed in terms of the legal strategy'.³²

This period also saw the emergence of police monitoring and prisoner support groups, which published reports and briefings throughout the dispute.³³ Sheffield Policewatch, an independent body, observed and monitored over 200 picket lines during the strike.³⁴ Despite initial 'hostility' from some pickets amid confusion about its role,³⁵ the data it gathered proved vital in subsequent criminal proceedings.³⁶ A conference organised by the Sheffield Campaign for Police Monitoring on 2 March 1985 brought together speakers from the Asian Youth Movement, SCAR/Afro-Caribbean community, Policewatch and the Greater London Council, enabling mutual learning and solidarity.³⁷

The remainder of this article explores the intricate dynamics of legal support during the miners' strike, examining the motivations and strategies of the actors involved, as well as the challenges they faced. By conceptualising 'lawyering from below' as a collective

process that transcended conventional legal practice, this analysis will illustrate how the spirit of WP Roberts' radical legal advocacy was expressed during this period.

War of attrition

While Roberts waged a 'war of attrition' in nineteenth-century courts, lawyers during the 1984-1985 miners' strike faced a legal onslaught aimed at depleting NUM resources and weakening the resolve of its members. The challenge was compounded by the extensive legal support required. While the NUM and Areas of the NUM sought legal representation in the civil courts to resist injunctions and challenge the sequestration and receivership of their assets, legal representation was also required in the criminal courts for the thousands of pickets arrested across the coalfields. Central to the legal fightback was a principled commitment to contest each case on its individual merits, often leading to prolonged legal confrontations. The Newcastle office of the trade union law firm Thompsons Solicitors exemplifies this 'war of attrition' in action. Initially representing the Durham Colliery Mechanics' Association, Thompsons later took on cases for the DMA, whose members had become dissatisfied with their existing solicitors' advice to plead guilty to offences on the basis that the union would pay the fines. Alan Mardghum, a former face worker at Wearmouth Colliery in Sunderland who was arrested twice during the strike, expressed the collective frustration among members:

'We're not guilty, man. We want you to put a case up for us. We're not guilty,' and we were not always. I mean sometimes, aye, you were but you still plead not guilty, you try. The reason you're getting paid is to try, is to defend us'.³⁸

The policy of Thompsons, in contrast, was 'to fight everything we possibly could'.³⁹ Solicitor Tony Briscoe, who drew on his experience representing pickets arrested during the Grunwick dispute, explained how the office was placed on 'a war footing'.⁴⁰ This involved mobilising most of their resources and staff to handle strike-related arrests, and retraining lawyers who had primarily specialised in personal injury and employment law to provide representation in the criminal courts. To enable the solicitors to process a large volume of cases efficiently, Briscoe devised 'pick-packs', which were bundles of A4 brown envelopes containing a legal aid green form application for initial advice and representation, a pen, a short questionnaire and a packet of cigarettes.⁴¹ After being notified of arrests by the union, solicitors would be dispatched from Thompsons to the relevant police station. Solicitor Janet Allan explained the importance of offering early reassurance to the often young and inexperienced miners arrested: 'the arrest was, for most of them, pretty shocking and a really anxious experience. And we were there to say, 'Don't worry, you're going to be



Tony Briscoe, formerly of Thompsons Solicitors, Newcastle.
Courtesy of Tony Briscoe.



Janet Allan, formerly of Thompsons Solicitors, Newcastle.
Courtesy of Janet Allan.

looked after, this is what's going to happen'.⁴²

Solicitors later conducted interviews with clients and witnesses at the union offices in Durham, with the support of union officials and members of the women's support groups, who Allan described as unfailingly kind and supportive.⁴³ For more serious cases, barristers from Vera Baird's Collingwood Chambers in Newcastle were instructed, while solicitors handled the majority of cases. These typically involved low-level public order arrests from local picket lines, dealt with in the magistrates' courts. Rather than accept the blanket bail conditions imposed on pickets, the lawyers used their right to challenge bail conditions individually, consuming a significant amount of court time. Tony Briscoe explained the rationale: 'my mindset was "these are not criminals", and therefore I had to pull out every stop I could to tip those scales back the other way in their favour'.⁴⁴ Briscoe emphasised that the audience for these 'legal dramas' was not just the magistrates, but the wider community:

I was there to address the magistrates on behalf of each individual picket, but I was also there to speak to the people behind me, namely the pickets' workmates who had come there out of solidarity. My aim was to stiffen their resolve and let them know that if they were arrested, they too would get a fair crack of the whip. They were getting a lot of stick in the media, and it was a morale booster for them to watch a good fight over bail conditions even if it wasn't often won.⁴⁵

This shift to a more combative legal stance was not merely tactical but also symbolised a deeper alignment with the political struggle of the miners, embodying a form of legal resistance that extended beyond the courtroom. Solicitor Geoff Shears, then head of Thompsons' Newcastle office, explained how the firm adapted quickly to the sudden influx of strike-related cases:

It was important because the cause was important because what they were standing for was important. It was important to every trade unionist, who could see clearly where the government's policy was aiming to be. So even those [lawyers] who were not dealing with picketing cases or other aspects of the dispute, had something to do in covering the work of those who were.⁴⁶

While solicitors provided the legal 'first aid' in mining communities, barristers were instructed in more serious cases. The miners' strike coincided with the formation of Took's Court in London, a radical barristers' chambers founded by Michael Mansfield, Helena Kennedy and Patrick O'Connor among others. O'Connor recalled how the lawyers 'cleared the decks' in order to prioritise miners' strike cases:

Technically, the Bar has this 'cab-rank rule' whereby anybody who instructs you first, you have to do the

case. But that did still leave a lot of room for us, as it were, to clear the decks and commit ourselves to an important political cause [...] we decided to commit a lot of resources to the miners' strike.⁴⁷

The *political* significance of the legal cases emerging from the miners' strike was emphasised by all interviewees. However, the lawyers revealed diverse approaches to blending politics with legal work. Janet Allan, for example, reflected on the influence of the 'very left-wing' environment at Thompsons in Newcastle on her practice as a young solicitor: 'You could see politics at work in a really active and meaningful way, which was very exciting'.⁴⁸ In contrast, Nottingham solicitor Suzie Gregson-Murray highlighted a clear separation between her politics and legal practice, stating:

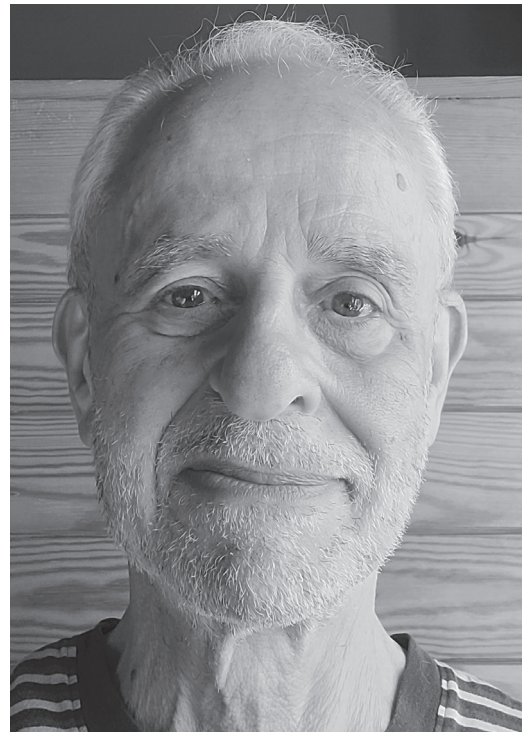
I never got involved in the politics, I just didn't do that. We didn't need to; we were dealing with legal issues, human rights issues. And that's what we stuck to.⁴⁹

Barrister John Hendy drew a distinction between lawyers on the 'inner circle', for whom it was important to align closely with the political priorities of the NUM ('we appreciated this was absolutely life and death; this was not another industrial dispute') and those 'at the periphery', where the focus was on legal expertise rather than political alignment ('all they had to do was the best case they possibly could, and I'm sure all of them did').⁵⁰

Despite varied approaches to law and politics, a profound commitment to solidarity and community remained at the heart of the legal fightback. The following section explores the personal and communal bonds formed during the strike, uncovering the significant human aspect of legal advocacy and its impact on the strike.

The people's cause

In his biography of WP Roberts, Challinor recounts the deep connection and mutual respect that developed between Roberts and the communities he represented. A ballad commemorating his legal triumph against the Bond recounts how Roberts celebrated with his clients, 'treating them far better than the noblest in the land'.⁵¹ This theme resonates throughout the oral history interviews, which paint a vivid picture of lawyers not just as legal advisers but as vital sources of support and solidarity within mining communities. In many cases these relationships transcended professional boundaries, evolving into lifelong friendships, rooted in shared struggles and aspirations. Cardiff solicitor Mick Antoniwi captured the essence of these relationships when asked about the importance of being 'on the miners' side', 'Oh yeah, listen, absolutely, because you became friends with some of these people, you developed a relationship with them, and it wasn't just a



Robert Lizar, Robert Lizar Solicitors, Manchester. Courtesy of Robert Lizar.

one-off case [...] these were people you got to know very, very well and some of them I still know very well to this day'.⁵² David Temple, a member of the Durham Colliery Mechanics' Association who was arrested during the strike, echoed this sentiment, recalling the lasting friendships and solidarity that developed between lawyers and miners, 'We had people to back us up. [...] I know we had the *best*, and we remained good friends with them, you know, long afterwards'.⁵³

This bond, built on a foundation of mutual understanding and trust, was crucial in navigating the varied experiences and perspectives of the miners. Sheffield solicitor John Peysner emphasised that 'you had to be able to understand the worldview that they had'.⁵⁴ The initial trust between lawyers and their clients often came through endorsements from the NUM. Nottingham solicitor Suzie Gregson-Murray recalled that 'Jack Taylor [President of the Yorkshire Area of the NUM] gave us the files, and everyone knew Jack Taylor. And if we're good enough for Jack Taylor, we're good enough for the individual miners, so that they knew we'd come recommended'. In Gregson-Murray's experience, this trust was further cemented by the lawyers' competence and dedication: 'we'd get trust by doing the work. You do a good job, get the results, then they know you're on their side'.⁵⁵

For some, being 'on their side' extended beyond legal representation. Many interviewees engaged in



Alan Mardghum, former faceworker at Wearmouth Colliery, now Secretary of the DMA. Courtesy of Alan Mardghum.

broader solidarity work, such as raising funds and collecting food for struggling families. In addition to representing striking miners in criminal cases, Manchester solicitor Robert Lizar visited Lancashire's mining communities to hold legal advice sessions on issues such as housing and welfare benefits. An active member of the Chorlton miners' support group in south Manchester, he also contributed to collecting clothing and food, organising benefits and raising funds in support of the miners. Lizar explained:

It just felt like it was impossible not to get involved. I suppose it was 'which side are you on?' [...] It really seemed crucial to actually not just be on the sidelines but trying to do something to support these people. I can't begin to imagine what some of the striking miners and their families went through, it must have been desperate for them.⁵⁶

Vera Baird, a barrister and Labour Party activist in Newcastle, shared an amusing incident from her time collecting food donations for the miners outside a supermarket. She recounted seeing two judges from the local court, with whom she regularly interacted professionally, 'They would see me, this barrister, [laughter] holding this wheelbarrow, and I have to tell you neither of them put a piece of food in it!'⁵⁷

The impact of lawyers' dedication to 'the people's cause' extended beyond the courtroom and into the wider community, forging a sense of unity and strength. Durham miner Alan Mardghum reflected on the importance of being represented by 'good people' with the 'right ethics'. When asked whether he thought the lawyers at Thompsons were sympathetic to the miners' cause, he responded:

Aye, very much so and that came across. [...] It's not just they're saying a few words in the court or it's not they're just signing papers and stuff. They believed in what they were doing and that belief came through and gave you some confidence and some appreciation, you know, of them, of their efforts because it was genuine, it was heartfelt. [...] When we needed help, they were there and that meant a lot, and still does.⁵⁸

Heather Wood, of Women Against Pit Closures, reflected on how the lawyers' solidarity deeply resonated within her community of Easington, County Durham. She remembered:

They were so close to us, and I think that made you feel more confident. You might not have got what you wanted when you went to court but it made you feel more confident that somebody outside of our communities was working for us. That made a big difference, you know?⁵⁹

A particularly innovative example of lawyers combining professional practice with practical solidarity was the Ollerton legal advice centre in Nottinghamshire. Staffed by volunteer lawyers via a rota system organised by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, each lawyer would spend a week living in a striking miner's home, paying bed and board, and thus contributing to the household financially during a period of increased financial strain. Barrister Nicholas Blake explained:

We were doing legal advice clinics during the day, giving legal advice about public order offences; we were then monitoring anticipated clashes as legal observers to make sure that there was some independent evidence that could be called in court, if necessary, as to what had happened [...] and by our presence for that week, getting some cash into the household budgets, which were distinctly under pressure at this point of the strikes.⁶⁰

This solidarity between lawyers and miners was not one-directional; rather, the interviews reveal a symbiotic relationship where strength and confidence were mutually reinforced. Barrister Michael Mansfield, for instance, spoke of the profound 'closeness' that he developed with mining communities during the strike: 'We'd visit them in their homes. We'd see them burning their furniture because they had nothing else and living on rations sent up from the south by those who supported the miners, of which there were a large number'. He recalled that despite these hardships, he drew strength from the humour and stoicism of his clients:

I think the miners, in a way, and their wives, had a real sense of humour, a sense of history and they were very bright. All of them were very bright. So you were embraced by their warmth.⁶¹

Nottingham solicitor Suzie Gregson-Murray echoed these sentiments. Despite the pressures, she described this period as a 'sort of a happy time':

They were lovely clients to act for – they were funny, you know, would crack a joke. When you had them, sometimes in Mansfield Magistrates' Court, they had the biggest dock, and sometimes you'd have five or six of them in the dock together – they'd just bring them all in together. And you'd do your bail applications and then there'd be cheers from the back of the court, which one is not used to in court [laughs]. They shouldn't do that, but, you know, it was nice; it was encouraging. They were just a delight to deal with. I can't think of any we didn't like. They were just funny and stoical, and just, 'Ah, we'll just get on with it'. And we did.⁶²

Jim Nichol, a former branch secretary of the clerical section of the Northumberland Area of the NUM who qualified as a solicitor during the strike, explained that this 'camaraderie' between lawyers and clients was pivotal during the Mansfield riot trial.⁶³ In a display of solidarity, both groups shared accommodation at a humble, 'no-star hotel' they affectionately nicknamed 'The Greasy Gresham'. Nichol highlighted the significance of this arrangement:

it was important because the miners stayed with us in that hotel, that there was no distinction. We weren't staying in a smart hotel when the miners were down there. It was a dump.

To support the miners, who were struggling financially after the year-long strike, the lawyers organised collections to assist with their living expenses. Nichol fondly recalled a morale-boosting concert the lawyers put on mid-trial:

I get across Ricky Tomlinson,⁶⁴ who was in Brookside, so he's quite famous, to compere the concert. It's only lawyers who are participating. I sang 'The Trimdon Grange Explosion', which I can still sing today [...] we'd got all the miners' wives and girlfriends down or whatever and [Ricky] got some of them and he'd set up a table, as if it was sort of *Come Dancing* or whatever it is. And after the end of each act, they had to do 5.2, 5.4 and the like. [Laughs] [...] Honestly, it transformed the whole mood.⁶⁵

These relationships of solidarity played a crucial role in the legal defence of arrested miners. Barrister Patrick O'Connor highlighted the 'fantastic level of support' from a broad network of volunteers in preparing the defence cases before the Orgreave trial, which was instrumental in discrediting the police version of events.⁶⁶ Solicitor Suzie Gregson-Murray described working as 'a team' with her clients, who mobilised within their communities to gather witness statements and other evidence. Gregson-Murray contrasted the



Mansfield 55 commemorative badge. Courtesy of Jim Nichol.

well-prepared defence cases with how 'shoddily prepared' the prosecution were in the Nottinghamshire magistrates' courts, recalling Metropolitan police officers called as witnesses who were clearly not 'particularly bothered' and 'very casual', including one who had 'clearly been drinking' before giving evidence.⁶⁷

Writing in *Socialist Lawyer* in 2009, the late Michael Seifert reflected on the mutual learning experiences of lawyers and mining communities during the strike. He noted that while lawyers gained insight into class struggle and working-class solidarity, mining communities' interactions with women lawyers and those from diverse backgrounds helped break down any pre-existing barriers.⁶⁸ These sentiments were echoed by solicitor Ruth Bunday, who represented the family of Wakefield miner David Jones at the inquest following his death on a Nottinghamshire picket line. Based in Chapeltown, Leeds, Bunday had previously represented members of the Bradford 12, who in 1981 were charged with conspiracy offences after defending their community against racist attacks. She reflected:

I think what resonated with me over that period was the fact that, all of a sudden, there was a far greater understanding from the white community about what the black community had faced on the streets and in court, and how people could be verballed and misrepresented in court, because the miners found this was happening to them [...]. It was so exciting to realise that there was now a level of unity and understanding between those sections of society, the black community and the miners and miners' families.⁶⁹

Describing the role of radical lawyers in the US civil rights movement, Falciola argues that 'shared experiences', such as attending meetings, conventions and demonstrations, radicalised many lawyers and strengthened their sense of unity, giving them the

impression that a section of the legal profession was 'marching together'.⁷⁰ The oral history interviews also revealed a strong sense of solidarity among lawyers during the miners' strike. Manchester solicitor Robert Lizar, for example, highlighted the importance of local Haldane Society meetings in Manchester, recalling that it was:

... really helpful to have other like-minded lawyers to talk to, discuss how to approach cases and just to kind of, I suppose, share some of the kind of anxieties and concerns [...] because it's a big responsibility, really, which, I suppose, is obvious, if you're representing somebody [...] part of how to manage those worries and anxieties is to have other lawyers who have your political perspective to talk to.⁷¹

This sense of unity was particularly important for less experienced lawyers, who benefited from mentoring by more seasoned colleagues. Janet Allan, a newly qualified solicitor in Thompsons' Newcastle office, represented two Durham Mechanics members arrested at Orgreave and another at Mansfield. Allan remembered feeling overwhelmed by the high-profile nature and potential severity of the cases: 'I think I was quite terrified at the prospect of taking on these cases because (a) it was headline news and (b) it was an unlimited prison sentence if they were found guilty. [...] I'm thinking, 'What do I do?'. Janet recalled the tactical advice and support that she received from barristers Helena Kennedy and Michael Mansfield, and the influence of solicitor Gareth Peirce,⁷² whose experience and 'supremely gifted tactical approach' benefitted all involved.⁷³

The strong personal bonds and networks of solidarity that developed among lawyers, miners and their communities also presented challenges. The following section explores the complex interplay between the political, personal and professional dimensions of radical legal practice during the strike.

Unconventional paths

Challinor highlights a dichotomy in Roberts' career: his commitment to using his legal skills in the interests of the disadvantaged often led him down 'unconventional paths'. These paths sometimes conflicted with the emerging norms of a profession increasingly focussed on asserting its independence and professionalism. Kinghan points to this conflict within contemporary cause lawyering, where a tension emerges between a commitment to leverage legal expertise for progressive social change and traditional expectations of detached and impartial professionalism.⁷⁴ This delicate balance between personal politics and professional propriety resonated across the interviews. While describing close bonds with the miners, several interviewees emphasised the importance of maintaining professional boundaries. Jim Nichol, for example, while acknowledging the close friendships that developed between lawyers and miners during the strike, stressed that 'I don't think anyone

would step out of the bounds of what was proper'.⁷⁵ Barrister John Hendy, who handled the NUM's civil cases, also underscored the importance of professional discipline:

You mustn't step outside the bounds of what you're an expert on. I mean I was present at discussions about the disposition of pickets and you know things like that. Of course, if you're chatting about all sorts of things I could have thrown in a view on that, but it was not my place.⁷⁶

Writing in 2009, solicitor Michael Seifert described having to defend 'a barrage of complaints' of professional misconduct to the Law Society against Seifert Sedley from local law firms in Nottinghamshire during the strike, who alleged that they were poaching clients by undercutting fees (providing free legal advice) and advertising for clients.⁷⁷ Barrister Michael Mansfield also pointed to a strained relationship with 'the indigenous lawyers' in Yorkshire 'who felt that we were imperialists, growing an empire in the middle of their fields'. A complaint against Mansfield to the Bar Council ahead of the Orgreave trial left him feeling under constant threat:

I thought, 'if they get home on this, I'm going to be finished. [...] If they get me, then they get others'. Anyway, at the end, one looks back on it, I can't believe I had to go through all that. So we had to defend [the miners], at the same time realising I better watch my back. [...] And of course at the end of the day, there was nothing there that they could do much about. There wasn't anything there that they should have done anything about.⁷⁸

The networks of solidarity that developed between lawyers and miners, rooted in shared values and mutual support, often transcended professional boundaries, fostering profound and lasting relationships that empowered both lawyers and miners alike. However, this deep-seated commitment to the 'people's cause' was not without its personal costs. The interviews with solicitors, providing the legal 'first aid' in the mining communities, revealed the logistical and strategic efforts required to manage such an intense caseload effectively. Sheffield solicitor Mark Foley, who does not consider himself a 'radical lawyer', nonetheless embodied a profound dedication to the miners. Foley's firm represented around 700 miners in South Yorkshire during the strike, which required him to 'virtually set up home' in a back room of Rotherham Magistrates' Court:

I had a little pocket diary and it had in it all the cases, the names of the cases, when they were. And I remember later looking back at this and for six months, I think I was in Rotherham Magistrates' Court every single day, usually two or three, four cases a day and trials, one in the morning, one in the

afternoon, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, the odd one-day trial, the odd one-week trial, just months and months and months and months, back to back.⁷⁹

This demanding schedule extended beyond courtroom hours, with evenings often spent visiting miners' social centres, delivering talks or meeting with witnesses. Foley, whose youngest daughter was born during the strike, recalls the impact this relentless routine had on his family: 'For certainly a twelve-month period, I was barely at home'. Foley vividly described a particularly distressing experience on 'a roasting hot day' on 18 June 1984, when, along with London solicitor Gareth Peirce, he was one of the first lawyers to arrive at Rotherham police station in the immediate aftermath of the 'Battle of Orgreave'. Foley described the harrowing scene he encountered on arrival:

It was just awful. Ninety-six people, either in cells, six or seven to a cell or in, there was an exercise yard, and they were just lying around. It just looked terrible. And I know that there were people there who had broken arms and legs, and it took some time to get them removed and treated.

Unable to contact his wife due to the 'mayhem' of the evening, when he returned home in the early hours, he discovered that he was locked out:

I went to the door and I think, 'if I just kick it in the right place, it'll just break'. Well it didn't. The whole porch collapsed on me as I kicked it. And all the neighbours' lights went on all around and I thought, 'the police are going to come any minute now!'⁸⁰

John Peysner, Foley's law partner, also recalled the challenge of maintaining a balance between family life and his dedication to the miners' cause. When asked how he looked after his own welfare during this time he replied:

[Laughter] Very badly. I had three small kids. I worked six days a week. I went sailing on the Sundays to keep my sanity together. I looked after my kids. I used to spend at least one day a week filling in legal aid forms which is a massively tedious activity in order so you could get paid. We never had enough money to get somebody paid to do that which would have made life a lot simpler. I eventually ended up sitting outside my house one day having a panic attack because of the stress of it all.⁸¹

Nottingham solicitor Suzie Gregson-Murray recalled that her firm dealt with around 200 cases relating to the strike: 'It was a lot, a lot for a small firm. A lot of pressure'.⁸² Leeds solicitor John Davies spoke of the necessity of a radical reorientation within his firm to handle the intense workload:

At one stage I said, 'I can't take any more'. I think that was about 250, which is a lot of work when you're preparing for trial. But then, with the firm that you've got, accommodation could take place to make sure that time was freed up and there were others that could carry the normal caseload.

The knowledge of the profound social and political importance of the dispute was, however, a motivator for Davies:

They're fighting for their families, livelihoods, their jobs, their towns, their villages. [...] You got on with it. No, you did, you just did it. There was a purpose behind it [...] when you like your clients, you go the extra mile, don't you?⁸³

Despite these challenges, many interviewees stressed that their hardships were minor compared to those endured by striking miners and their families, and they expressed pride in their contributions to the struggle. Barrister John Hendy, for example, described the relentless experience of handling the NUM's civil cases while under constant surveillance by the security services. When asked how he coped with the pressure, Hendy replied:

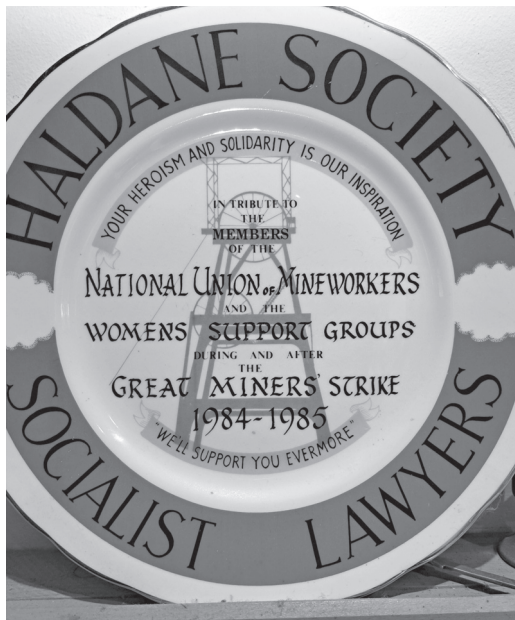
Well, I was a much younger fellow then. [Laughs] [...] And I just felt so honoured to be part of this struggle and intimate with these guys who were actually asking me what I thought. Bloody hell, I thought, asking *me* what my view was of these things was astonishing. And I felt I could make a contribution, you know?⁸⁴

A consequence of the close personal bonds that developed between lawyers and striking miners was that the eventual defeat was particularly hard-hitting. Almost all of the interviewees became emotional when discussing the miners' return to work. John Hendy remembered the day vividly:

When I saw them ... [emotional], when I saw them go back on the television, the men from Maerdy, fucking hell. I wept. Oh [sighs], yeah, that was so, after all they'd been through, you know. Oh, I knew it was a fucking disaster, I knew they were going to destroy the coal industry, and they were going to martyr the men and the union. And so they did, didn't they? Took them a few years, but they did.⁸⁵

The defeat was felt as acutely by those on 'the periphery' as by those in the 'inner circle,' as Hendy put it. Newcastle solicitor Janet Allan explained:

We had been so immersed in all, in all of the lives of our clients [...] it was a huge, huge tragedy, a huge tragedy, because people had personally paid so much in terms of the emotional stress of it all. And in the heady days at the beginning, I think we thought,



Commemorative plate produced by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers. Courtesy of Sir Nicholas Blake.

yes, you know we are, we are going to achieve something, and then it was the exact reversal and all the suffering and emotional turmoil for no reward at all, I think, was really, really, really hard to see and witness.⁸⁶

These reactions underscore the depth of emotional investment made by those who supported the miners' struggle. This was compounded by an ongoing sense of injustice, with several interviewees drawing parallels between the South Yorkshire Police's conduct after the Orgreave confrontations and the subsequent police cover-up of the 1989 Hillsborough football stadium disaster, where ninety-seven Liverpool fans were unlawfully killed.⁸⁷

Yet, amidst the disappointment, there remained an overwhelming sense of pride that lawyers had 'done their bit'. Sheffield solicitor John Peysner captured these mixed feelings when asked how he felt at the end of the strike:

Well, ambivalent because you were very, very disappointed that they'd returned without a settlement and really it was an abject failure. But on the other hand, our end, we'd held it up. There were very few cases where I felt people had been convicted when they shouldn't have been. And obviously there were some people who pleaded guilty because they were dead to rights so there was no issue there. But I felt most of our clients were innocent and they were found innocent. So, I thought that we'd done our bit.⁸⁸

This sense of professional pride amidst a crushing political defeat was echoed by Newcastle solicitor

Geoff Shears. Pointing to his firm's successful record of defending the miners in Durham, he reflected: 'as far as I'm aware, not a single miner, after our intervention, went to jail during the strike [...] we were of some use, and that was a wonderful place to be'.⁸⁹ This sentiment was shared by those they represented. As Durham Mechanics' member David Temple put it: 'they really did us proud'.⁹⁰ The miners' gratitude found expression in letters and other tokens of appreciation, acknowledging the support and solidarity they have received from lawyers during the strike. One such gesture was a beautiful sculpture of a coal miner presented to solicitor Jane Deighton by six of her Nottinghamshire clients. The sculpture bears the following engraving:

Presented to Jane Deighton in recognition of the loyal and devoted service that you and your colleagues of the Haldane Society gave to the miners during the Great Strike of 1984-1985. Without your legal help, your solidarity and support, the miners would have been destroyed. [Names x 6]. Six grateful striking miners from Rufford Colliery.⁹¹

The end of the strike shifted focus to defending the jobs of victimised miners and supporting those imprisoned.⁹² Lawyers also secured thousands of pounds in compensation for arrested and injured miners by pursuing civil claims against the police for wrongful arrest, malicious prosecution and assault.⁹³ Barrister Patrick O'Connor, who was involved in both the criminal trials and compensation claims related to Orgreave, described this as 'effectively a concession' that police officers fabricated evidence against those arrested.⁹⁴ Lawyers continue to play a role in the Scottish mineworkers' justice campaign, which in 2022 secured a pardon for thousands of Scottish miners convicted of offences during the strike,⁹⁵ and the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC), which is campaigning for a public inquiry into these events. Solicitor Chris Peace, one of the OTJC's main organisers, said the group has drawn strength from the 'incredible kindness and solidarity' from other justice campaigns, including Hillsborough, Grenfell and the Shrewsbury 24.⁹⁶ Forty years after the strike, these networks of legal solidarity continue to blossom.

Conclusion: 'They really did us proud'

This article has explored the complex interplay between legal practice and political solidarity during the 1984-1985 miners' strike, illustrating how the spirit of WP Roberts' radical legal advocacy was given expression during this period. In doing so, it has highlighted the critical role of legal solidarity networks during the strike, connecting lawyers, striking miners and communities and based on shared values and mutual support. These networks often transcended professional boundaries, fostering profound and lasting relationships that empowered both lawyers and miners alike.

It is, however, crucial to acknowledge the methodological limitations inherent to oral histories. These histories often rely on a limited selection of participants, and the loss of key individuals over time further narrows this perspective. Expanding the range of voices to include more pickets, strike committee members, and members of defence campaigns and police monitoring groups would enable a more comprehensive understanding. Despite these limitations, the oral histories provide unique insights into the transformative potential of radical legal advocacy and make a novel contribution to the literature on the strike. While McEvoy and colleagues are correct to caution against the uncritical ‘over-remembering’ of the heroic efforts of cause lawyers, the legal strategies, victories and defeats of this period serve as a vital case study in ‘lawyering from below’ during a period of intense social and political rupture, offering invaluable lessons for today’s law students and practitioners.⁹⁷

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NOTES

1. Raymond Challinor, *A Radical Lawyer in Victorian England: W.P. Roberts and the Struggle for Workers' Rights*, London: IB Tauris, 1990.
2. Challinor, 1990, p 268.
3. See, for example, Stuart A Scheingold, ‘Radical lawyers and socialist ideals’, *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 15, no 1, 1988, pp 122-38; Max Travers, ‘The phenomenon of the “radical lawyer”’, *Sociology*, vol 28, no 1, 1994, pp 245-58.
4. Jacqueline Kingham, *Lawyers, Networks and Progressive Social Change: Lawyers Changing Lives*, London: Bloomsbury, 2021.
5. Luca Falcicola, *Up Against the Law: Radical Lawyers and Social Movements, 1960s–1970s*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2022.
6. Anna Bryson, ‘The politics of preservation: oral history, socio-legal studies and praxis’, *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 48, no S1, 2021, pp S74-S87; Kieran McEvoy, ‘Beyond legalism: towards a thicker understanding of transitional justice’, *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 34, no 4, pp 411-40.

Amid expanding public order law, a resurgence of strike activity and a government-led backlash against ‘activist lawyers’, these experiences suggest that there is no inherent contradiction between ‘partisanship’ as a lawyer and maintaining high standards of professional and ethical responsibility. For barrister John Hendy, what ultimately matters is being a ‘bloody good lawyer’:

What you’ve got to do for your clients is the best you possibly can. You’ve got to be a bloody good lawyer. You’ve got to see all the angles and be ready to counter them. And that, I think, we did in the miners’ strike. I think we could be very proud of ourselves. True, we never came up with an ingenious device to defeat the bastards, but we met everything that they threw at us. Every single move we foresaw and manoeuvred, and prepared ourselves as best the union could be prepared, to fight.⁹⁸

7. Alessandro Portelli, ‘The peculiarities of oral history’, *History Workshop*, vol 12, no 1, 1981, pp 96-107, pp 99-100.
8. Falcicola 2022, p 8.
9. Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign [webpage]. Accessed online at <https://otjc.org.uk>, 25 April 2024.
10. Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers [webpage]. Accessed online at www.haldane.org, 25 April 2024.
11. Throughout the article, all locations, workplaces, titles and occupations are as they were during the 1984-85 miners’ strike, not necessarily at the time of the interview.
12. Ralph Darlington, “There is no alternative”: exploring the options in the 1984-5 miners’ strike’, *Capital & Class*, vol 29, no 3, 2005, pp 71-95.
13. Janie Percy-Smith and Paddy Hillyard, ‘Miners in the arms of the law: a statistical analysis’, *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 12, no 3, 1985, pp 345-54.
14. A key flashpoint in the strike, this day saw thousands of police officers drawn from ten police forces charge a crowd of pickets attempting to assemble at a south Yorkshire coking plant. See Tony Bunyan, ‘From Saltley to Orgreave via Brixton’, *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 12, no 3, 1985, pp 293-303.
15. Nick Blake, ‘Picketing, justice and the law’, in Bob Fine and Robert Millar (eds), *Policing the Miners’ Strike*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1985, pp 103-19.
16. Percy-Smith and Hillyard, 1985.
17. Ian MacGregor, *The Enemies Within: The Story of the Miners’ Strike, 1984-5*, London: Collins, 1986, p 216.
18. Interview with James Nichol, born in Northumberland in 1945, solicitor;

recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 14 April 2023.

19. Interview with Michael Seifert, interviewed by Chris Thomas, 2007, unedited interviews for ‘The Great Grunwick Strike’, University of Warwick, catalogue reference 803/17A, transcript p 1.
20. Interview with Jane Deighton, born in Atlanta, Georgia, USA in 1952, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 3 October 2023.
21. The Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers is a legal and campaigning organisation that was founded in 1930. For a history of the Haldane Society, see Nick Blake and Harry Rajak, *Wigs and Workers: A History of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers 1930-1980*, London: Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, 1980.
22. Michael Seifert, ‘Haldane Society: our finest hour’, *Socialist Lawyer*, no 52, 2009, pp 26-27.
23. Interview with John Hendy, born in London in 1948, barrister; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 2 November 2023.
24. Northumberland Archives, catalogue reference NRO 07951/2.
25. John Hendy, letter to Robert Lizar, 6 June 1984, from Robert Lizar’s personal collection.
26. Jeremy McMullen, ‘Legal strategy and the unions’, in Fine and Millar, 1985, pp 217-26.
27. Interview with John Davies, born in Urmston in 1951, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 27 January 2023.
28. Northumberland Archives, catalogue reference NRO 5021/A9/64.
29. Northumberland Archives, catalogue reference NRO 5021/A9/64.

30. McMullen, 1985.
31. The findings of this study are published in Percy-Smith and Hillyard, 1985.
32. Interview with Janie Percy-Smith, born in Essex in 1954, PhD student; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 3 February 2023.
33. Tony Jefferson and Jan Smith, 'Watching the police', *Critical Social Policy*, vol 5, no 13, 1985, pp 124-33; Martin Walker, 'Miners in prison: workers in prison: political prisoners', *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 12, no 3, 1985, pp 333-43.
34. Sheffield City Archives, catalogue reference SY704.
35. Interview with Catherine Flannery, born in Sheffield in 1961, clerical officer, Sheffield City Council; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 25 August 2023.
36. Interview with Michael Mansfield, born in London in 1941, barrister; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 18 April 2023.
37. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, catalogue reference MS84/MW/5/5.
38. Interview with Alan Mardghum, born in Sunderland in 1955, face worker, Wearmouth Colliery, Sunderland; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 28 March 2023.
39. Interview with Janet Allan, born in Thomaby in 1957, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 14 June 2023.
40. Interview with Tony Briscoe, born in Stepney in 1947, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 23 May 2023.
41. See also Janet Allan, "'Let justice prevail though the heavens fall!"; Thompsons, the miners' strike of 1984, and me', *North East History*, vol 52, 2021, pp 179-89.
42. Interview with Janet Allan.
43. Interview with Janet Allan.
44. Interview with Tony Briscoe.
45. Interview with Tony Briscoe.
46. Interview with Geoffrey Shears, born in Plymouth in 1946, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 23 May 2023.
47. Interview with Patrick O'Connor, born in Wallasey in 1949, barrister; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 30 June 2023.
48. Interview with Janet Allan.
49. Interview with Suzie Gregson-Murray, born in Kendal, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 26 October 2023.
50. Interview with John Hendy.
51. Challinor, 1990, p 106.
52. Interview with Michael Antoniwi, born in Aldershot in 1954, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 12 January 2024.
53. Interview with David Temple, born in Birmingham in 1944, coalface electrician at Murton Colliery, County Durham; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 28 March 2023.
54. Interview with Interview with John Peysner, born in Hull in 1948, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 24 May 2023.
55. Interview with Suzie Gregson-Murray.
56. Interview with Robert Lizar, born in Manchester in 1949, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 28 April 2023.
57. Interview with Vera Baird, born in Oldham in 1950, barrister; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 17 May 2023.
58. Interview with Alan Mardghum.
59. Interview with Heather Wood, born in County Durham in 1951, local authority worker; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 27 June 2023.
60. Interview with Nicholas Blake, born in London in 1949, barrister; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 18 July 2023.
61. Interview with Michael Mansfield.
62. Interview with Suzie Gregson-Murray.
63. Before qualifying as a solicitor, Jim Nichol had formerly worked in an administrative role at several Northumberland coal mines and was the Colliery Officials and Staffs Area branch secretary at the Prestwick and East Walbottle Collieries. The Mansfield 55 riot trials related to a mass rally held in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire in May 1984.
64. Ricky Tomlinson was one of three building workers imprisoned for conspiracy offences arising from the 1972 national building workers' strike. The Court of Appeal overturned the convictions of members of the Shrewsbury 24 in 2021 following a long campaign.
65. Interview with James Nichol.
66. Interview with Patrick O'Connor.
67. Interview with Suzie Gregson-Murray.
68. Michael Seifert, 2009. See also Penny Green, *The Enemy Without: Policing and Class Consciousness in the Miners' Strike*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990.
69. Interview with Ruth Bunday, born in Essex in 1947, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 24 March 2023.
70. Falcia, 2022, p 280.
71. Interview with Robert Lizar.
72. Two years prior to the Orgreave confrontation, Peirce was part of the defence team that secured acquittals for the Bradford 12.
73. Interview with Janet Allan.
74. Kinghan, 2021, p 30.
75. Interview with James Nichol.
76. Interview with John Hendy.
77. Seifert, 2009, p 27.
78. Interview with Michael Mansfield.
79. Interview with Mark Foley, born in Blackpool in 1954, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 24 August 2023.
80. Interview with Mark Foley.
81. Interview with John Peysner.
82. Interview with Suzie Gregson-Murray.
83. Interview with John Davies.
84. Interview with John Hendy.
85. Interview with John Hendy.
86. Interview with Janet Allan.
87. Professor Phil Scraton notes that following Orgreave, the South Yorkshire Police internally reviewed and altered their officers' statements, as they did four years later after Hillsborough (Phil Scraton, personal correspondence, 20 February 2024).
88. Interview with John Peysner.
89. Interview with Geoff Shears.
90. Interview with David Temple.
91. From Jane Deighton's personal collection.
92. Organisations like the Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee and the National Organisation for Miners in Prison and Supporters worked with lawyers to support sacked and incarcerated pickets. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, catalogue reference MS84/MW/5/3.
93. Joanna Gilmore, 'Lessons from Orgreave: police power and the criminalisation of protest', *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 46, no 4, 2019, pp 612-39.
94. Interview with Patrick O'Connor.
95. Interview with Neil Findlay, born in Bangour, West Lothian in 1969, former Member of the Scottish Parliament; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 23 October 2023; The Miners' Strike (Pardons) (Scotland) Act 2022 provides a pardon for miners who were convicted of certain offences in Scotland relating to the 1984-1985 miners' strike.
96. Interview with Chris Peace, born in Leeds in 1970, solicitor; recorded by Joanna Gilmore, 20 September 2023.
97. Kieran McEvoy, Louise Mallinder and Anna Bryson, *Lawyers in Conflict and Transition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, p 314.
98. Interview with John Hendy.

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