



Language

The miners' strike to defend their industry against extensive pit closures was also a highly politicized conflict between the National Union of Mine-workers (under the leadership of Arthur Scargill) and the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher. Scargill hoped to repeat the success of the NUM in the early 1970s in undermining the then Conservative government, and Mrs Thatcher was determined to force the miners into surrender. The strike, which the miners eventually lost, saw a government assault on civil liberties and high levels of tension, animosity, and sometimes violence between police and strikers, and was a turning point in industrial relations in Britain. The strike was in due course undermined by a breakaway regional miners' union who distrusted the NUM leadership, and the legitimacy of the strike was questioned because there had not been a national strike ballot. At the time the Coal Board and the Government stated that they only planned to close 20 pits, but Scargill claimed that the real goal was to close 70 pits: release of previously classified government information early in 2014 under the 30 year rule proves that Scargill was correct and the government lied at the time. The coal industry has been largely destroyed. The significance of the miners' strike, and the implications of the miners' defeat for British trade unionism, is suggested by the large number of books and pamphlets it generated, some of which are listed below. A documentary film, '[Still the Enemy Within](#) [1]', directed by Owen Gower, 113 minutes, was released in 2014. Another film released in 2014, '[Pride](#) [2]', was the fictionalized account of a true story: the links formed between the London-based group Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners and a Welsh mining community and local NUM between 1984-85.

One unexpected and more positive by product of the strike was that it mobilized many women in the mining communities (not previously active in industrial disputes) to organize support for the strikers and play a more prominent role locally (see section F.1.b). The continuing significance of police methods during the strike was reflected in the 12 June 2015 Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) Report on police tactics and alleged misconduct during the violent confrontation with thousands of pickets at the Orgreave coking plant. The report accepted that mounted police charged without warning and miners threw missiles in response, and that some police used excessive violence. The report also found that some officers committed perjury (evidence of this led to the 1985 acquittal in court of 95 miners charged with riot and unlawful assembly). But despite criticism of senior police officers in South Yorkshire, the IPCC decided not to launch a formal investigation.

Beynon, Huw, [Digging Deeper: Issues in the Miners' Strike](#) [3], London, Verso, 1985, pp. 280

Callinicos, Alex ; Simons, Mike, [The Great Strike: The Miners' Strike of 1984-5 and its Lessons](#) [4], London, Socialist Worker, 1985, pp. 256

Coulter, Jim ; Miller, Susan ; Walker, Martin, [State of Siege: Miners' Strike 1984: Politics of Policing in the Coal Fields](#) [5], London, Canary Press, 1984, pp. 240

Critique of policing methods.

Francis, Hywel, [History on Our Side – Wales and the 1984-85 Miners' Strike](#) [6], Swansea, Parthian Books, 2009, pp. 96

(new edition in preparation)

Account of how the strike developed differently in Wales from other parts of Britain, and grew into a national movement involving community groups, churches and Welsh nationalists and fostered a greater national consciousness with a lasting impact on Welsh politics.



Goodman, Geoffrey, [The Miners' Strike](#) [7], London, Pluto, 1985, pp. 224

Examines why the strike failed and the role of key institutions and the pickets. Includes a chronology.

Kelliher, Diarmaid, [Solidarity and Sexuality: Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners 1984-5](#) [8], History Workshop Journal, Vol. 77, issue 1 (spring), 2014, pp. 240-262

Among the many groups that sprang up to offer financial support and solidarity to the miners was the London-based Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners. This article charts support offered by LGSM and discusses wider implications for the movement on the left.

McCabe, Sarah ; Wallington, P., [The Police, Public Order and Civil Liberties: Legacies of the Miners' Strike](#) [9], London, Routledge, 1988, pp. 209

Milne, Seumas, [The Enemy Within: The Secret War Against the Miners](#) [10], London, Verso and Pan, 1995, pp. 511

Parker, Tony, [Red Hill: A Mining Community](#) [11], [1986], London, Faber and Faber, 2013, pp. 236

Eyewitness accounts (from different perspectives) of impact of strike on community.

Samuel, Raphael ; Bloomfield, Barbara ; Boanas, Guy, [The Enemy Within: Pit Villages and the Miners' Strike of 1984-5](#) [12], London, Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1986, pp. 260

Collection of first-hand accounts, interviews, letters, speeches etc.

Saunders, Jonathan, [Across Frontiers: International Support for the Miners' Strike](#) [13], London, Canary, 1989, pp. 288

Winterton, Jonathan ; Winterton, Ruth, [Coal, Crisis and Conflict: The 1984-85 Miners' Strike in Yorkshire](#) [14], Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989, pp. 360

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Links

[1] <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3815426/> [2] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3169706/?ref=fn_al_tt_1 [3] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1985/digging-deeper-issues-miners-strike> [4] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1985/great-strike-miners-strike-1984-5-and-its-lessons> [5] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1984/state-siege-miners-strike-1984-politics-policing-coal-fields> [6] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2009/history-our-side-wales-and-1984-85-miners-strike> [7] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1985/miners-strike> [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2014/solidarity-and-sexuality-lesbians-and-gays-support-miners-1984-5> [9] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1988/police-public-order-and-civil-liberties-legacies-miners-strike> [10] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1995/enemy-within-secret-war-against-miners> [11] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2013/red-hill-mining-community> [12] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio->



A.1.a.ii. British Miners' Strike, 1984-85

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