

INFECTED BLOOD SCANDAL



Images courtesy of Mark Ward, Tainted Blood campaign

THE SCANDAL

During the 1970s, the British government failed to secure the national blood supply needed to research and treat haemophilia. They therefore imported blood products called Factor VIII from the USA. Factor VIII was produced by pooling blood from multiple paid donors, many of whom were high-risk. In the 1980s, the NHS also continued using blood donated by those in UK prisons and borstals, and by US military personnel based in the UK.

The UK did not manage to kill some of the viruses contained in Factor VIII until the mid-1980s allowing it to be used for unethical research on the haemophilia community.

In May 1983 ministers were told to withdraw all blood products produced in the USA after 1978 but the NHS continued to use the products in stock. Contaminated Factor VIII blood was used for research on haemophilia patients until the mid-1980.

As a result, over 30,000 NHS patients were infected with HIV and/or hepatitis C. Almost every person living with haemophilia - approximately 4,800 - was infected with hepatitis C. Over 1,200 of these were also infected with HIV, including 380 children.

Want to know more?
taintedblood.info

POLICE RIOT AT ORGREAVE

DID YOU KNOW?

Patients were secretly infected, monitored and not informed of their diagnosis for years. The UK government deliberately destroyed medical records and official documents relating to blood safety.

In Scotland, the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) failed to adequately screen blood, much of which was donated by the prison population, a group known to be at higher risk of infection. Despite warnings from the Medicines Inspectorate in 1983, the SNBTS allowed infected blood to be used for a further two years, resulting in 3,000 people being infected in Scotland.

The Penrose Inquiry into what happened in Scotland cost £12m but could not call key witnesses and did not hold anyone accountable.

WHY WE NEED HILLSBOROUGH LAW

“The harms done were compounded by a lack of openness, transparency and candour by the NHS and government, such that the truth has been hidden for decades”

Sir Brian Langstaff, Infected Blood Inquiry Report

“I was used for unethical research, assaulted, irreversibly harmed and left to die. I have been lied to, ignored and demonised just as we have seen so many other victims of scandals over the past fifty years”

Mark Ward, campaigner and child victim of the infected blood scandal.



THE SCANDAL

On 18th June 1984, during the Miners’ strike, thousands of miners travelled to the coking plant at Orgreave, South Yorkshire, to take part in a mass picket.

The miners were met by around 6,000 police officers brought from forces all over Britain. These were commanded by the South Yorkshire Police, the same force that in 1989, along with the then Conservative government, would be involved in the cover-up around the Hillsborough disaster.

Police officers directed many of the miners into a field to the south of the plant, trapping them between rows of police and a railway embankment. Dozens of mounted officers then charged up the field towards the miners, followed by riot police armed with batons and short shields. Fleeing miners were chased, violently beaten, and arrested. 95 miners were eventually charged with riot or unlawful assembly.

The trial of the first 15 miners charged with riot collapsed due to unreliable police evidence. Prosecutions of the 95 miners were eventually dropped and South Yorkshire Police paid £425,000 compensation to some miners. In 2015, an Independent Police Complaints Commission report highlighted concerns about the police’s excessive violence and questioned the evidence they presented at the trial.

Want to know more?
otjc.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

The BBC reversed their 18th June footage of the events at Orgreave to make it look like the miners had started the violence, which was untrue.

In 2024, shortly before the election of a Labour government, which had committed to holding an inquiry, Northumbria Police destroyed evidence of police conduct at Orgreave.

WHY WE NEED HILLSBOROUGH LAW

“I used to have respect for the police, but after Orgreave and what they did to us, I can’t trust them. It’s the same for my sons who saw the effects on me”

Kevin Horne, miner arrested at Orgreave, and Orgreave Campaign activist

“Any destruction of important information relating to violent police attacks on striking miners means that crucial evidence is no longer available [...] This all adds to the many concerns we have about police cover-ups and justice being denied”

Kate Flannery, Orgreave Campaign activist

“The trial collapsed because of the police’s attempt to present fabricated evidence. A duty of candour would hopefully prevent this happening again at the inquiry”

Chris Peace, Orgreave Campaign activist