

**Debate Pack**

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By

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# Potential merits of a public inquiry into Cammell Laird workers imprisoned in 1984

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**Summary**

There will be a Westminster Hall debate on Potential merits of a public inquiry into Cammell Laird workers imprisoned in 1984 on Tuesday 7 February 2023 at 2:30pm. The debate will be opened by Gareth Thomas MP. This briefing contains background information, parliamentary and press material, as well as suggested further reading which Members may find useful when preparing for this debate.

# 1 Background

## 1.1 The Cammell Laird industrial dispute 1984

The Cammell Laird shipbuilding company originated in Birkenhead in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with shipyards on the river Mersey. It produced there many notable civilian and military vessels including the Battleship HMS Prince of Wales (1941) and aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal (1950). In 1977 it was nationalised along with the rest of the British shipbuilding industry, forming part of British Shipbuilders.<sup>1</sup>

By the early 1980s British Shipbuilders was in financial difficulties, leading to widespread job losses, shipyard closures and plans for privatisations.<sup>2</sup> These plans were accelerated by the passage of the British Shipbuilders Act 1983.

Cammell Laird had, by October 1983, already reduced its workforce to 3,300, down from 5,500 in 1977. Throughout the early months of 1984 more workers were identified as surplus to requirements due to the lack of shipbuilding orders, with many workers taking voluntary redundancy. In May 1984 further cuts of around 1,000 additional jobs were announced and compulsory redundancy notices were issued on 1 June.<sup>3</sup>

Opposition to the plans from workers led to an escalating industrial dispute throughout the summer. An academic paper "[From Workplace Occupation to Mass Imprisonment: The 1984 Strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders](#)" by Dr Stephen Mustchin, an industrial relations researcher and member of the Work and Equalities Institute at Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, provides more detail about the strike, its background and outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

At the time, the Cammell Laird shipyards in Birkenhead had only two active projects – the construction of what has been described in different sources as either a partially built gas rig or a jack-up accommodation vessel, and the construction of a warship known as HMS Edinburgh.

On 28 June, by which time around 1,700 to 1,800 workers remained employed, plans to move these two partially built vessels out of the shipyard was the final trigger for a strike by members of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers' and Allied Trade Union (GMBATU). Most of the involved workers were, by this

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<sup>1</sup> Wirral Archives, [Cammell Laird Shipbuilders](#), Wirral.gov.uk [accessed 3 February 2023]

<sup>2</sup> [HC Deb 13 November 1980 vol 992](#) cc622-40

<sup>3</sup> Dr Stephen Mustchin, "From Workplace Occupation to Mass Imprisonment: The 1984 Strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders", *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 31/32, 2011, p45

<sup>4</sup> Dr Stephen Mustchin, "From Workplace Occupation to Mass Imprisonment: The 1984 Strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders", *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 31/32, 2011

point, working under the six-weeks' notice period of their redundancy notices. Other workers had accepted pay in lieu of notice.<sup>5</sup>

During the dispute, from July through September 1984, some of the striking workers set up picket lines on the gangways of the two vessels, eventually escalating into a full occupation of the rig and blocking access to HMS Edinburgh.<sup>6</sup>

During August 1984 divisions emerged between some of the workers who established a "back-to-work" movement and those determined to continue the occupation. Dr Mustchin's paper discusses how the dispute escalated in late August:

On 23 August 1984 the already confrontational atmosphere escalated, with Cammell Laird chief executive, Michael Murden, setting a deadline of that day for the men to leave the yard or face prosecution for trespass. The redundancy notices issued at the beginning of June to most of the occupiers expired during this week; Murden warned that if they continued with the occupation they would be regarded as having 'dismissed themselves' and would therefore not be entitled to severance pay as they would have been sacked for gross misconduct.

On 24 August, a mooted compromise deal between GMBATU and British Shipbuilders, which centred on offering the strikers an extension of their redundancy notices and the possibility of a job in the yard in the future, was rejected by the strikers. A small number of the occupiers accepted this deal, but the rest were dismissed, lost their redundancy pay, and were threatened with prosecution for trespass.<sup>7</sup>

By 3 September the remaining occupiers had all been dismissed from their jobs but remained inside the yard, barricaded onboard the rig and maintaining the picket line on the warship's gangway. In the course of September, Cammell Laird Ltd began legal proceedings against the remaining occupiers through the High Court, seeking to have them removed from the shipyard.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Dr Stephen Mustchin, "From Workplace Occupation to Mass Imprisonment: The 1984 Strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders", *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 31/32, 2011, p45

<sup>6</sup> As above, p46

<sup>7</sup> As above, p48

<sup>8</sup> As above, p49

## 1.2

# Legal proceedings and imprisonment

### The instant proceedings

On 5 September, Cammell Laird applied without notice to Mr Justice Glidewell for a court order in terms that the occupation should cease and those taking part should no longer be permitted to enter the shipyard. The application was supported by an affidavit.<sup>9</sup>

Mr Justice Glidewell made an eight-day order on 5 September to the effect that the occupation by those named in the order should stop. Parallel proceedings were started by Cammell Laird for possession of the land on which the rig and HMS Edinburgh were situated and an affidavit in support of the possession proceedings was affixed to both the rig and the ship, in accordance with requirements under Rules of court.

At the end of the eight days, the men were still in occupation and blocking access to HMS Edinburgh. In consequence, the matter came before Mr Justice Glidewell again on 13 September. In setting out the facts of the case in a later Court of Appeal judgment,<sup>10</sup> Lord Justice Lawton stated the men had been given notice of what was alleged against them and that the matter was returning to court – although none appeared at the hearing.

An order was made by Mr Justice Glidewell on 13 September. The substance of the order reflected the following remedies requested by Cammell Laird in their statement of claim:

(a) An Order for delivery of goods namely a jack-up accommodation vessel under construction which is being wrongly interfered with by the Defendants their servants and agents.

(b) An Order for delivery of goods namely a vessel under construction known as H.M.S. Edinburgh which is being wrongly interfered with by the Defendants their servants and agents.

[...]

(e) An Injunction to restrain the Defendants by themselves their servants and agents from entering onto the said jack-up accommodation vessel.

(f) An Injunction to restrain the Defendants by themselves their servants and agents from entering onto the said vessel known as H.M.S. Edinburgh.

[...]

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<sup>9</sup> A written statement of evidence sworn before a person authorised to administer such statements

<sup>10</sup> *Cammell Laird Shipbuilders Limited v (1) Edwin Trotter and (2) Edward Marnell and Others* [1984] 10 WLUK 91

(h) An Injunction to restrain the Defendants by themselves their servants and agents from entering on to the Plaintiffs' said land without the written consent of the Plaintiffs.

The terms of the order were set out in lettered paragraphs. Although it was not strictly part of the order, Lord Justice Lawton noted that the following was included:

If any Defendant shall fail to comply with this Order he shall be liable to be arrested and committed to prison for Contempt of court.

On 14 September, notices setting out the order were attached to the gangways leading to the rig and HMS Edinburgh.

The men remained in occupation and, according to the Court of Appeal, there were two avenues left to Cammell Laird: either to execute a writ of possession granted by Mr Justice Glidewell on 13 September, or have the men committed for contempt of court.<sup>11</sup>

On 20 September, three members of Cammell Laird staff swore in affidavits that the men continued to be in occupation. On 21 September, Cammell Laird applied to have the men committed for contempt of court. Mr Justice Glidewell made an order that the application to commit should be heard on 26 September and served on all the men by 5pm on 24 September.

The men did not appear at the hearing on 26 September, at which Cammell Laird relied on three further affidavits to prove the contempt. In making the order for committal, Mr Justice Glidewell said:

My order therefore is that each of these defendants be committed to prison for contempt of Court if they fail to obey my order of the 13th September, in each case for one month; but I propose to suspend the execution of my order in the case of each defendant for a further four days; that is to say, until midnight on Sunday next. If any defendant vacates the vessels and the yard within that time, then the warrant is not to take effect against that defendant though I make it clear, lest there should be any misunderstanding, that any return thereafter would be a breach of my order, and that of course would be a contempt and the warrants should then be executed. But if any defendant now takes the opportunity that I am offering – and I hope all of them will; I sincerely hope that some at least will – then the warrants will not be executed against any of them who now, belatedly, obey my order. These orders I now make will come into effect immediately after midnight on Sunday of this week against any of the defendants who have not then obeyed it. Thereafter any defendant who is arrested – any one of them; I do not need to say this – has the right to apply to a judge of this Court for the discharge of the order I have made.

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<sup>11</sup> A writ of possession is a means of enforcing an order for possession

The men remaining in occupation were subsequently arrested between 1 and 3 of October and sent to Walton Prison. In total, 37 of the occupiers were arrested and imprisoned.<sup>12</sup>

## Appeal to the Court of Appeal

The Official Solicitor appealed against the order for committal.

The appeal was heard in the Civil Division of the Court of Appeal.

Lord Justice Lawton, giving the leading judgment, outlined the role of civil courts in relation to the enforcement of orders and sanctions:

The prime purpose of the civil courts ... is to get its orders obeyed, not to impose penalties. If a contumacious party, when summoned before the court appears, admits the contempt, apologises for it and undertakes for the future to comply, often the court is content to make no further order save as to costs. But if there is no appearance and the flouting of the order continues, upon proof of the contempt the court has to impose penalties; not to do so would be to surrender to the wrongdoers. What the penalties will be, will depend upon the gravity of the contempt, the circumstances in which it was committed and the amount of damage, if any, done.

Counsel for the Official Solicitor put forward various procedural grounds of appeal relating to non-compliance with Rules of court that purportedly invalidated the order for committal. It was also submitted that it was unnecessary to commit the men to prison for the length of time imposed. These submissions were rejected. Dismissing the appeal, Lord Justice Lawton stated:

As I said in the comments I made at the beginning of this judgment, when there is a deliberate flouting of the law by men who put themselves above the law, there is no scope for mitigation of penalties. We took the precaution at the beginning of this hearing of giving these men one last opportunity of apologising and expressing regret. At our suggestion the Official Solicitor sent a member of his staff to Walton Prison to interview these men. He saw them all together. Apparently only a few spoke, but all of them made it clear that they were not willing to apologise. It is likely that if they had done so, remission of some part of these penalties, but not the whole, might have been allowed.

After judgment had been handed down, there was discussion between counsel for the men and the Lord Justices of Appeal about a possible appeal to the House of Lords on a question of general public importance. Having been asked by the judges whether the Court of Appeal should give liberty to apply, counsel for the men said:

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<sup>12</sup> Dr Stephen Mustchin, "From Workplace Occupation to Mass Imprisonment: The 1984 Strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders", *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 31/32, 2011, p52, footnote 104: citing the *Morning Star*, 9 October 1984

The question of any appeal to the House of Lords will be entirely academic so far as the contemnors are concerned; some of them will be released next Friday.

There is no evidence in case law that an appeal was made to the House of Lords.<sup>13</sup>

## General legal background

### The nature of contempt

Proceedings for contempt of court may be brought in the civil courts, or in courts with criminal jurisdiction. Criminal and civil contempts can be committed in civil proceedings; both contempts may also be committed in criminal proceedings.<sup>14</sup>

Contempt has historically been divided into two categories: civil contempt and criminal contempt, as described by Lord Toulson in *R v O'Brien*:

There is a distinction long recognised in English law between “civil contempt”, ie conduct which is not in itself a crime but which is punishable by the court in order to ensure that its orders are observed, and “criminal contempt”.<sup>15</sup>

[...]

Breach of an order made (or undertaking obtained) in the course of legal proceedings may result in punishment of the person against whom the order was made (or from whom the undertaking was obtained) as a form of contempt.<sup>16</sup>

[...]

A criminal contempt is conduct which goes beyond mere non-compliance with a court order or undertaking and involves a serious interference with the administration of justice. Examples include physically interfering with the course of a trial, threatening witnesses or publishing material likely to prejudice a fair trial.<sup>17</sup>

### Rules of court and non-compliance with court orders

Rules of court govern procedure in civil and criminal courts. They give the courts numerous powers, including powers to make orders, enforce orders or undertakings, and to impose sanctions for disobedience or breach.

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<sup>13</sup> The Appellate Committee of the House of Lords was the highest court in the United Kingdom prior to being replaced by [The Supreme Court](#) in October 2009.

<sup>14</sup> White Book 2022, Volume 2, Section 3C, Contempt of Court, An Outline of the Law of Contempt of Court, para 3C-4

<sup>15</sup> *R v O'Brien* [2014] UKSC 23 [at 37]

<sup>16</sup> As above, [at 38]

<sup>17</sup> As above, [at 39]

Proceedings for contempt of court may arise from breaching, or failing to comply with, a court order.

Prior to the enactment of the Civil Procedure Rules,<sup>18</sup> Order 45 r.5 of the Rules of the Supreme Court gave civil courts the power to commit a party to prison for non-compliance with a judgment or court order.<sup>19</sup>

Committal was the means by which the High Court or Court of Appeal could exercise its power to punish a party found to be in contempt of court under Order 52, r.1:

1. - Committal for contempt of court

(1) The power of the High Court or Court of Appeal to punish for contempt of court may be exercised by an order of committal.<sup>20</sup>

The current powers of the civil court in relation to committal for contempt are to be found in [Part 81](#) of the [Civil Procedure Rules](#), specifically [rule 81.9](#):

(1) If the court finds the defendant in contempt of court, the court may impose a period of imprisonment (an order of committal), a fine, confiscation of assets or other punishment permitted under the law.<sup>21</sup>

Under [section 14](#) of the [Contempt of Court Act 1981](#), a higher court exercising its power to commit for contempt of court may impose a maximum prison term of two years, or one month in the case of a lower court:

(1) In any case where a court has power to commit a person to prison for contempt of court and (apart from this provision) no limitation applies to the period of committal, the committal shall (without prejudice to the power of the court to order his earlier discharge) be for a fixed term, and that term shall not on any occasion exceed two years in the case of committal by a superior court, or one month in the case of committal by an inferior court.<sup>22</sup>

Further general information on contempt can be found in Attorney General's guidance: [The Law Officers' approach to contempt of court referrals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

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<sup>18</sup> The Civil Procedure Rules 1998 (SI 1998/3132)

<sup>19</sup> Rules of the Supreme Court (Revision) (SI 1965/1776), Order 45, r.5, in force from 1 October 1966 to 25 April 1999

<sup>20</sup> Rules of the Supreme Court (Revision) (SI 1965/1776), Order 52, r.1, in force from 1 October 1966 to 25 April 1999

<sup>21</sup> White Book 2022, Volume 1, Section A, Part 81, Applications and Proceedings in Relation to Contempt of Court [from 1 October 2020]

<sup>22</sup> Contempt of Court Act 1981, s14(1)



## 1.3

### Subsequent campaigns

Dr Mustchin notes that “Since the strike, the men, particularly Marnell, have campaigned to clear their names and to receive the redundancy pay owed to them. They were seemingly ‘blacklisted’ and could not get work in other shipyards or even as casual labour on the docks.”<sup>23</sup> Calls for action in recent years have focused on getting a formal apology from the UK Government, release of official papers and a public inquiry.

In 2013 Edward Marnell, an ex-Cammell Laird worker and GMB member, presented a petition to the European Parliament on behalf of the Cammell Laird strikers, alleging a “miscarriage of justice” and “contravention of basic human rights of the people involved under established European and international laws, Treaties and conventions.”<sup>24</sup>

Jude Kirton-Darling MEP, a then member of the European Parliament petitions committee, was quoted in a [Wirral Globe article](#) in 2015 commenting on the petition and calling on the UK Government to release all relevant papers and information “to allow justice for the Laird strikers.”<sup>25</sup> She reportedly told MEPs:

Last year in the petitions committee, Eddie Marnell, one of the people on strike at Cammell Laird, explained that in spite of the fact no law was broken, the strikers were never told why they were arrested. Investigations into historical miscarriages of justice - like the Battle of Orgreave - have shown that, despite denials from the then-Government, secret closure plans existed and Conservative ministers at the time sought to influence police tactics and put pressure on them to escalate industrial disputes. Access to official documents is key to ensuring justice for those on the receiving end.<sup>26</sup>

The European Parliament Committee on Petitions resolved in December 2014 to “send a letter to the UK authorities asking a formal apologise [sic] due to unjustified actions taken at that time towards the workers” and await the findings of the European Commission on the matter.<sup>27</sup> The European Commission reply, quoted in an [EP Notice to Members on the petition from 16 December 2014](#), concluded that “EU law does not seem to have been violated

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<sup>23</sup> Dr Stephen Mustchin, “From Workplace Occupation to Mass Imprisonment: The 1984 Strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders”, *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 31/32, 2011, p56

<sup>24</sup> European Parliament Committee on Petitions, petition No 1961/2013

<sup>25</sup> “[Government pressed to release all papers concerning 1984 Cammell Laird strike](#)”, *Wirral Globe*, 29 January 2015

<sup>26</sup> As above

<sup>27</sup> European Parliament Committee on Petitions, [Minutes of the European Parliament Committee on Petitions 1-2 December 2014](#)

in the present case. Therefore, the Commission does not have the power to intervene on behalf of the petitioners on this occasion.”<sup>28</sup>

In April 2017 the issue was raised in the Commons by MPs Angela Eagle, Jim McMahon and Pat Glass, who asked the Government about their plans to respond to the European Parliament Committee on Petitions from 2014. Phillip Lee, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Victims, Youth and Family Justice, responded for the Government that “Industrial relations and how they were historically dealt with are not a matter for the Ministry of Justice” but “I will look at this case further if I am returned to this role after the election.”<sup>29</sup>

The issue was raised again in the Commons in October of 2017 by Jim McMahon MP. Phillip Lee, again responding for the Government, told the Commons that “The Ministry of Justice does not think it holds any documents with regard to this case.”<sup>30</sup>

The [Labour Party manifesto for the 2019 general election](#) [PDF] included a pledge that “We will release all papers on the Shrewsbury 24 trials and 37 Cammell Laird shipyard workers”.

On 19 April 2021 an [Early Day Motion](#) was tabled, signed by 34 Members, which called on the Government to “launch an inquiry and put into the public domain any and all documentation, including cabinet papers, from that period that may shed fresh light on those events.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> European Parliament Committee on Petitions, [Notice to Members: Petition No 1961/2013 by Edward Marnell \(British\), on behalf of Cammell Laird strikers, on Unjust treatment of Cammell Laird strikers](#) [PDF], 16 December 2014

<sup>29</sup> [HC Deb 25 April 2017 c992](#)

<sup>30</sup> [HC Deb 31 October 2017 c690](#)

<sup>31</sup> [EDM \(Early Day Motion\)1751: Campaign for the thirty-seven Cammell Laird workers imprisoned in 1984](#), 19 April 2021

## 2

# Establishing public inquiries

### 2.1

## What are public inquiries for?

Public inquiries play an important role in public life. There are different types of public inquiry, but in this context “public inquiry” refers to those inquiries set up by Government ministers to investigate specific or controversial events. [Lord Howe identified six functions](#) for such public inquiries:

- **Establishing the facts** – providing a full and fair account of what happened, especially in circumstances where the facts are disputed, or the course and causation of events is not clear;
- **Learning from events** – and so helping to prevent their recurrence by synthesising or distilling lessons which can be used to change practice;
- **Catharsis or therapeutic exposure** – providing an opportunity for reconciliation and resolution, by bringing protagonists face to face with each other’s perspectives and problems;
- **Reassurance** – rebuilding public confidence after a major failure by showing that the government is making sure it is fully investigated and dealt with;
- **Accountability, blame and retribution** – holding people and organisations to account, and sometime indirectly contributing to the assignation of blame and to mechanisms for retribution;
- **Political considerations** – serving a wider political agenda for government either in demonstrating that “something is being done” or in providing leverage for change.<sup>32</sup>

In the 18th and 19th centuries, parliamentary committees often investigated the conduct of government and its officials. In the 20th century, judges would often be appointed to chair independent public inquiries, investigating events of public concern.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Howe, [The management of public inquiries](#), *Political Quarterly* 70, (1999) pp 294-304, summarised in Kieran Walshe and Joan Higgins, [The use and impact of inquiries in the NHS](#), *British Medical Journal*, Vol 325, (19 October 2002) pp 896-7.

<sup>33</sup> For a full analysis of the development of public inquiries, see Public Administration Select Committee, [Government by Inquiry \(PDF\)](#), HC 51-I 606, 3 February 2005, pp7-16.

## 2.2

# Different forms of public inquiry

### Statutory public inquiries

Since its enactment, statutory public inquiries have normally been held under [the Inquiries Act 2005](#). They can also be held under other statutory provisions however, including bespoke ones. See for example the:

- [Office of Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups](#), held under [section 3 of the Children Act 2004](#); and
- Northern Ireland [Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry](#), held under [Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2013](#)

### Non-statutory public inquiries

Non-statutory inquiries – those commissioned by a Government Minister, but which do not take place under the authority of an Act of Parliament – take three main forms:

- non-statutory ad hoc inquiries;
- inquiries by a Committee of the Privy Council; and
- Royal Commissions.

For more information about statutory public inquiries see the Library briefing paper on [Statutory public inquiries: the Inquiries Act 2005](#).

For more information about non-statutory public inquiries see the Library briefing paper on [Public Inquiries: non-statutory public inquiries](#).

### 3

## Press articles/notices

[Minister 'dragging his feet' over sacked Lairds workers](#), Liverpool Echo, 26 April 2018 [Intranet link]

[Fresh hope for Cammell Laird strikers in their 30 year campaign for justice](#), Liverpool Echo, 25 April 2017

[Justice for Cammell Lairds 37](#), GMB, 18 January 2017

[Government pressed to release all papers concerning 1984 Cammell Laird strike](#), Wirral Globe, 29 January 2015

[Former Cammell Laird shipyard worker wins European Parliament backing in 30 year battle for justice](#), Liverpool Echo, 2 December 2014

[City freedom for rig rebels](#), The Times, 10 October 1984 [Intranet link]

[Jailed ship men must apologize](#), The Times, 9 October 1984 [Intranet link]

[Rig sit-in ends](#), The Times, 4 October 1984 [Intranet link]

## 4

# Parliamentary material

## Parliamentary questions

### [Cammell Laird: Strikes](#)

Asked by: Gareth Thomas

20 Oct 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 59415

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions (a) Ministers and (b) senior officials in his Department had on the 1984 Cammell Laird shipyard dispute with (i) other Government departments, (ii) the GMB trade union and (iii) other stakeholders between 1997 and 2007; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Chris Philp | Department: Cabinet Office**

The Cabinet Office does not hold any documents on the 1984 Cammell Laird dispute. Records created in 1984 have been transferred to The National Archives, as required by the Public Records Act 1958. We cannot answer what discussions were had over the 10 year period, as answering would produce disproportionate costs.

### [Cammell Laird](#)

Asked by: Mick Whitley

18 May 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 900162

If he will make an assessment of the potential merits of holding a public inquiry into the 1984 imprisonment of 37 striking Cammell Laird workers.

**Answering member: Chris Philp | Department: Ministry of Justice**

The appropriate route to challenge a conviction and/or sentence is by way of appeal.

Anyone who has been convicted of a criminal offence in England, Wales or Northern Ireland can apply to the Criminal Cases Review Commission, which can review and investigate possible miscarriages of justice. Where there is a real possibility that the conviction or sentence will not be upheld, the Commission can refer the case to the appropriate court.

For the Commission to refer a case there normally needs to be significant new evidence or issue that might affect the safety of the conviction or sentence.

## Early Day Motions

### [Campaign for the thirty-seven Cammell Laird workers imprisoned in 1984](#)

19 Apr 2021 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 1751 (session 2019-21)

Primary sponsor: Mick Whitley

**Number of signatures: 34**

That this House warmly welcomes the victory of the Shrewsbury Twenty Four campaign in its decades long quest for justice; recognises that there are hundreds of other trade unionists and protestors who have been the victims of unjust and politically motivated punishments, including thirty-seven workers imprisoned in the Category A prison HMP Walton for their participation in the occupation of the Cammell Laird shipyards in 1984; understands that those imprisoned workers endured immense suffering and economic hardship as a result of their month-long detention and the blacklisting and loss of redundancy and pension rights that followed that imprisonment; condemns that gross miscarriage of justice and regrets that many of those who were so imprisoned have tragically not lived to see their names cleared; applauds the surviving members of that thirty-seven for their unwavering commitment to seeing that wrong righted and the GMB Union for its support of those members; notes that the Government has failed to honour its commitment to exploring the merits of holding a public inquiry into that historic injustice; further notes that in 2014, the European Parliament's Commission on Petitions stated its belief that the authorities' response to that dispute was an overreaction and that an apology should be considered; and calls on the Government to launch an inquiry and put into the public domain any and all documentation, including cabinet papers, from that period that may shed fresh light on those events.

**[Other Parliamentary material about the 1984 Cammell Laird dispute](#)**

## 5

## Further reading

[From Workplace Occupation to Mass Imprisonment: The 1984 Strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders](#) , Dr Stephen Mustchin, Historical Studies in Industrial Relations, April 2011, Accessed 3 February 2023

[Cammell Laird Shipbuilders Limited v \(1\) Edwin Trotter \(2\) Edward Marnell and Others, 1984](#) C No.6223 In the Supreme Court of Judicature Court of Appeal (Civil Division) On Appeal from the High Court of Justice Queen's Bench Division Liverpool District Registry 1984 WL 978581 Court of Appeal Westlaw - Intranet link, Accessed 3 February 2023



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