

PRIME MINISTER

13 MAY 1988

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister addresses Scottish Conservative conference  
 EC: Informal Finance Ministers meeting, Lubeck-Travemunde ( to 15 May)  
 Adenauer conference on single internal market, Lake Como (to 15 May)  
 Mr Topger, German Environment Minister, visits DOE

STATISTICS

BSC/BISPA: Usable steel production (Apr)

PAY

Atomic Energy Authority, industrial grades

PARLIAMENTCommonsBusiness:PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Rear Seat Belts by Children)

Bill: Remaining Stages: (Mr Steven Day)

Environment and Safety Information Bill: Remaining

Stages: (Mr Chris Smith)

Adjournment Debate: The Government's response to the funding applications  
 by the Quest for a Test for Cancer campaign (Mr J  
 Hayes)

MINISTERS - See Annex



PRESS DIGEST

Steel resigns; Ashdown early - and clear - favourite to succeed as SLDP leader.

Owen accuses Steel of "parachuting out" and leaving SLD like a plane out of control.

Press suggest Steel isn't going to stand because he knows he can't win.

Ferry chaos nearly over as secondary picketing ends; P&O dispute continues and NUS hope to help Sealink fight commercial war with P&O.

Union now expected to ask High Court to return its assets.

Mirror leads with story that a P&O ferry skipper sailed from Zeebrugge with bow doors open eight months after tragedy. Skipper admits he did wrong under pressure.

Lords revolt against Education Reform Bill - make opting out more difficult. Kenneth Baker suggest Commons will overturn it.

Lord Young suggests EC single market will create 5million jobs; his task is to get as many of them as possible for Britain.

Peter Walker to launch £500million regeneration of Welsh valleys.

Postmen win average of 6.8% pay rise.

Somewhat varying interpretations of your remarks in House - re Chancellor. Some say you denied him thrice. Others that you praised him to calm jitters. And some say both things.

Bank of England signals need for rise in world interest rates.

Shultz and Shevardnadze sort out technical problems holding up INF ratification.

Independent claims Ayatollahs have discussed freeing hostages, including Terry Waite.

BBC Governors back showing of film on Gibraltar incident; so does Council of IBA in relation to Thames programme.



PRESS DIGEST

Express, following up Philby's death, suggests he wasn't third man; this was the wife of a former Tory Minister (who is not named). Peter Wright describes Philby as "an outstanding man in intelligence world".

Express says rural Tories have launched a campaign to block new housing programme.

Independent claims corruption in Metropolitan Police and rivalry between police and Customs is seriously hampering fight against drugs; some police and C&E staff see each other as enemy.

Football League chairmen agree £200million deal with British Satellite Broadcasting which could cut out BBC and ITV who threaten to black-out the sport.

Nicholas Ridley fuels controversy over Green Belt by disclosing that in next decade London and South East will need 150,000 more houses than estimated two years ago.

Left-wing on CPSA fight back with resolution calling for investigation into union officials' salaries - want them cut from £30,000 to average pay of members (£6,000).

Leader of Brent Council owes £3,000 in rent; 9 Labour councillors owe £12,000 in rent and rates in total. All of them have their expenses allowance stopped until they pay.

Tube driver found slumped in his cab on Piccadilly line nearly 5 times over limit; sacked and charged.

Prison warders at Wandsworth staged lightning walkout in protest over new manning levels.

BBC cleaning supervisor, 63, dies of Legionnaire's disease.

Big row over "inadequate" punishment (£10,000 fine, banned from two tournaments) on Cliff Thorburn, snooker star, for drug taking.

USA admits it is considering sale of its most sophisticated fighter bomber to Kuwait - (Guardian); a significant escalation of Middle East arms race.

Press says Reagan stumbled in his endorsement of Bush or Boosch, or Bosh.



PRESS DIGEST

Spanish Tories, in Euro-Parliament, want Britain to be required to drive on righthand side like rest of Europe.

Mark Thatcher looking for an apartment in Paris.

"Exclusive" feature in Today on your home in Dulwich - neighbours flocking to sell.

DAVID STEEL

Star report headed "No-where man". Quits race that brought no prizes. Isn't standing because he doesn't think he can win.

Sun - Steel ducks out. Quits as new party chief to avoid the sack; leader says Steel recognises there is no chance of breaking Labour/Tory duopoly. Third force is a spent force.

Mirror - End of a dream as Steel quits. Leader says Steel was the Eddie Edwards of politics. Admired for determination; commended for courage; but always destined to come last with no medals.

Today - His return to Backbenches should not be mourned. Most people agree you are strongest peace-time leader this century. Steel and Kinnock are seen as nice chaps but weak. Labour MPs display same lack of bottle by failing to challenge Kinnock. So any genuine challenge to Tories will have to come from SLDP under dynamic and charismatic leader: Ashdown.

Express - Cheers all the way as Steel bows out. But he may have jumped before he was pushed. Edward Pearce feature on "Ashdown, a roaring leopard amid the doormice".

Mail says Steel did much for the Liberal Party and was a better leader than many of his party members appreciated. But it is right he should go. Perhaps his greatest failure is the legacy he leaves behind.

Telegraph - Tears flow as Steel steps down. Ashdown hot favourite as SLD leader.

Guardian - Owen acidic as Steel bales out; leader says there is precious little to show for Steel's years of leadership and much to blame for the way SLD was finally launched on the world.



PRESS DIGEST

Times leader discussed David Steel's time in Parliament. Through almost his whole career, he thought it safe to say nothing of any interest about economic policy, to fail to think about it and to assume that "Thatcherism" - perhaps because it came from so obviously "illiberal" a figure as Mrs Thatcher - was bound to fail. Dr Owen, whatever mistakes he made, did not make that one.

Dennis Kavanagh, professor of politics, Nottingham University, in the Times says David Steel as leader of Liberal Party has been a bit player in many minor political dramas in past 12 years.

SEAMEN'S STRIKE

Sun - Sealink strike sunk by union. McCluskie admits defeat.

Today - Sealink strikers go back.

Express - Shattered seamen's chief halts Sealink ferry strike. Wilks demands union boycott of P&O. Leader says rule of law beat Luddite Seamen. NUS has run into new reality: Unions are no longer free to lash out with impunity at innocent third parties. Leader says that at last Steel has made a political decision that is absolutely right.

Independent - NUS calls off Sealink ferry strike, after hearing from several ports that the strike was crumbling. Hundreds of lorry drivers lifted their blockade at Dover.

Times leads with P&O and Sealink chiefs locked in jungle warfare over Channel ferries. James Sherwood says strike has cost them £3million and it is his intention to recover it from the hide of P&O in the weeks to come. He hopes that NUS view their battle with P&O who claim Mr Sherwood is talking a lot of nonsense.

Times - Striking Dover seamen petition EC to draw up stricter safety rules for ferries.

Mail - Sad McCluskie calls off strikes at ports. Dispute now reverts to a local one with P&O.

Telegraph leads with James Sherwood, Sealink, attacking P&O stubbornness and McCluskie acting to avoid split in union.

Guardian - Attack on P&O by Sealink chairman.



PRESS DIGESTINDUSTRY

Sun impatient with Department of Energy's idea of privatising coal in next Parliament; coal and electricity should be sold off on same day.

Today - leader on British Telecom's claims of improved service says every improvement doesn't need to be gratefully received. It is no less than the public deserves. Express says BT admits doorless telephone kiosks are too noisy to use on busy streets.

Independent - leader says it has taken almost a decade, but the Government has belatedly plucked up courage and declared its determination eventually to privatise British Coal. Handled properly privatisation of the pits could become an opportunity to release local initiative and encourage enterprise.

FT - United Biscuits is to close its 46 year-old Halifax biscuit works with the loss of almost 1,000 jobs.

Times - BAe gives Airbus work to US firm after no British company put in a bid.

Times - Outgoing CBI president Sir David Nickson, attacks Government over its merger policy.

Times - 1,250 members of Lloyds facing losses of more than £100million as a result of rising claims from US liability insurance written in the early 1980s.

POLITICS

Sun recalls Kinnock, in election, saying he would rather take to the hills than use nuclear weapons against Russian invader. Now there are stories he is in favour of keeping the weapons on basis of "no first use". If so, it is merely a cynical ploy to fool voters.

Times - Labour accuses Government of using public funds for party purposes by plagiarising Government advertising material for Conservative political campaigns.

Times - Labour welcomes plans for the setting up of an independent policy institute to promote left-wing political thinking.



PRESS DIGEST

Ferdy Mount, in Telegraph, says the threat that every action of the Government will be automatically reversed by the Lords looms less large.

Telegraph - leader on Speaker says it would be disastrous for Government - and for you - representing constitutional principles to seem to be disparaging the Speaker.

YOUR VISIT TO SCOTLAND

Mirror says you shouldn't be visiting Scottish Cup final.

Express - Maggie rallies Scots. You go to boost Tory ratings. You will tell them more rather than less Thatcherism is answer to Scotland's problems.

Times - The pro-devolution lobby in the Scottish Conservative Party was obliterated yesterday after a passionate debate.

Times - Speculation rife that you are to attend Scottish FA Cup Final tomorrow.

PM/CHANCELLOR

Sun - Maggie's pat on back for Lawson. You went out of your way to praise Chancellor and calm jittery markets. But you refused repeated opportunities to back his campaign to stop the pound soaring and clear rift over exchange rate is not over.

Today - Maggie's summit snub for Lawson: You had 3 chances to back him and failed every time.

Express - Lawson and Thatcher calm jitters on sterling.

Mail - Maggie's faint praise widens Lawson rift. Rapidly developing into cause celebre.

Independent - You refused to back Lawson on exchange rates and pointedly side-stepped invitations to back the Chancellor's handling of exchange rate policy.

FT - Thatcher and Bank underline sterling dilemma. Bank says that present combination of huge exchange rate and low interest rates does not represent an ideal response to current concerns and a different balance would be desirable. In the Commons you repeatedly declined the opportunity to endorse Mr Lawson's view about exchange rate stability.



PRESS DIGEST

Times - Tory MPs were puzzled and Opposition leaders jubilant last night over your failure to respond to direct challenges to support the Chancellor on exchange rate policy.

Telegraph - Thatcher refuses to speak up for Lawson.

Guardian - Thatcher leaves Lawson in lurch.

EDUCATION BILL

Sun - Lords school revolt.

Mirror - School blow to Tories.

Today - Rebel Lords torpedo shake up inschools - major blow to Prime Minister.

Express leads with major defeat for parent power; leader headed "Lords need a lesson" says Lords can smell blood and are content on enjoying themselves. But what do they think the country was doing last June 11. It was voting for a Tory manifesto containing opting out right of parents.

Mail - Lords change schools Bill. George Gale in Mail says Lords are setting themselves up in opposition to elected Government. They are tolerable, just, as an anachronism. They will be intolerable, and will have to be got rid of, if they deny the will of the elected Government.

Independent - Government suffered its first defeat in the House of Lords on its plans to allow schools to opt out of local education authority control. Lords voted to insist that opting out must be backed by a majority of parents eligible to vote.

PHILBY

Independent - leader says individual treachery and treason so vile as Philby's proves nothing one way or the other about the code behind which it was concealed. It serves only as a reminder that men are corruptible and may abuse what they are given.

Times - TASS confirms death of Philby describing his as a remarkable Soviet intelligence agent; Peter Wright calls him an outstanding man.



PRESS DIGESTMEDIA

FT - Super Channel saved as major shareholders agree to put in more money and restructure the company.

FT - Oracle teletext service is considered for Stock Exchange flotation.

Times - Michael Grade makes a scathing attack on the expected selection of Rees-Mogg as chairman of new Broadcasting Council saying that while a BBC governor he had contempt for producers; feature article by Michael Grade appears in the Times under the heading of "This taste for censorship".

NHS

Independent - The privately sponsored NHS lottery is operating illegally because it is still not officially registered, the Home Office and the London Borough of Kensington said yesterday.

LAW & ORDER

Independent - Estate agents accused of prejudice against non-white buyers.

FT - PAC says Government departments have failed to ensure adequate security in their computer systems.

MUSEUMS

Independent - Britain's national museums are falling into decline, according to report by Museums and Galleries Commission.

FRANCE

Mirror says Mitterrand is president again because he has successfully dumped left-wing policy. Lesson for Kinnock is plain.

Times leader looks at the French Government saying the last thing the Socialist president wants is a new enthusiastic intake from the Left in the National Assembly, nor, presumably, does M Rocard - who gets on better with those outside his party than those within it.



PRESS DIGESTGIBRALTAR

Times - Lawyers representing families of IRA terrorists shot in Gibraltar begin moves to ensure SAS appear at inquest; relatives say Irish Government has information that you presided over a secret cabinet sub-committee meeting which gave a "shoot to kill" order.



MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

DEM: Mr Fowler visits North West

DEN: Mr Parkinson gives closing address to the Institute of Mining conference, Blackpool; later visits the British Gas compressor station, Lancashire

DES: Mr Baker meets National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers and later meets Association of County Councils and Association of Metropolitan Authorities, about the Interim Advisory Committee's report on teachers pay

DTP: Mr Channon visits Sheffield

HO: Mr Hurd addresses the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Magistrates Association

DEM: Mr Lee launches E15 pack, telesnaps, pilot franchise operation, Skelmersdale

DEM: Mr Cope tours the East Midlands

DEN: Mr Morrison addresses Confederation of British Industry conference, London

DHSS: Mr Portillo visits Southport local office

DHSS: Mr Newton addresses Healthcare Financial Management Association spring conference, Birmingham; later addresses Mental After Care Association AGM, London

DOE: Lord Caithness visits University College, London to attend DOE research projects presentation

DOE: Mr Trippier addresses the British Chamber of Commerce lunch, Manchester

DOE: Mr Moynihan visits London Docklands

DTP: Mr Bottomley visits Gwent

MAFF: Baroness Trumpington opens Sarson Vinegar, Stourport-upon-Severn

MOD: Lord Trefgarne visits Culham laboratories, Oxfordshire

WO: Mr Roberts hosts and addresses lunch for Welsh Consumer Council, Cardiff; later presents Hewlett-Packard Computer in Schools awards, Cardiff

WO: Mr Grist visits Cardiff Bay Development Corporation; later visits Merthyr Housing Association

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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

ODA: Mr Patten visits South Africa (to 15 May)

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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DOE: Mr Ridley takes part in BBC Radio 4's 'Any Questions', Lancaster

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TV AND RADIO

'Today': BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

'Open Air: World Service Special': BBC 1 (11.00)

'Business Daily': C4 (12.30)

'The Parliament Programme': C4 (14.00)

'Any Questions?': BBC Radio 4 (20.20) with Nicholas Ridley, David Steel, Joe Mills and Claire Rayner

'Review': BBC 2 (21.30) A Prayer for the Dying - programme reviews a new film set amid the troubles in Northern Ireland and considers how successfully cinema and television have met the challenge of representing Ulster on the screen.

'The World Tonight': BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by 'The Financial World Tonight' and 'Today in Parliament'

'The London Programme Special': ITV (22.35) child sex - the wall of silence

'Newsnight': BBC 2 (22.45)

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